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300 COVERS INSIDE!

SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S ISSUE

# DRAGON®

# 300

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SEALED 16-PAGE SECTION

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DRAGON (USPS 318-790) is published monthly by Paizo Publishing, LLC, 3245 146th Place SE, Suite 110, Bellevue, WA 98007, United States of America. (ISSN# 1062-2101) Periodicals Postage Paid at Bellevue, WA, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO Dragon, P.O. Box 469107, Escondido, CA 92046.
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**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Contact Publishers Creative Systems at **dragon@pcspublink.com** or call 1-800-395-7760. In the UK, contact **subscriptions@tnsofres.com** or call +44-18-41-4713.

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**Northeastern Advertising Representatives:** Sig or Scott Buchmayr, Buchmayr Associates, 137 Rowayton Avenue, Rowayton, CT 06853, (203) 855-8834.

**DISTRIBUTION:** National and international distribution is provided by Curtis Circulation Company, 730 River Road, New Milford, NJ 07646. Tel: (201) 634-7400. Fax: (201) 634-7499.

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Printed in the U.S.A.

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## NEW SPELLS

I first encountered *Dragon Magazine* in a small bookstore in Renton, Washington that has long since become a parking lot. I was a frequent customer, happily exchanging my allowance for gaming products. When I saw an issue of *Dragon* for the first time, I couldn't resist. What got me? The first installment of Ed Greenwood's "Pages from the Mages." I had known there was a magazine devoted to D&D, but I didn't know the most important thing—it had new spells! It's important that you understand how significant this was in the life of an 8-year-old D&D fan, so I'll reiterate. It had new spells!

From then on, I was a *Dragon* fan.

Some 15 years later, then *Dragon Magazine* editor Dave Gross was sitting beside me in the HR department at Wizards of the Coast, less than a mile from the bookstore-turned-parking-lot where I first saw *Dragon*. "What," Dave asked, "do you like about *Dragon*?"

Surely this was a trick, but I couldn't resist, so I simply said, "It has new spells." After that, Dave asked some questions about filing, but I got those wrong. That night, I got a call with a job offer.

After doing the dance of joy for the rhythmically challenged, my first thought was "Mom's going to like this less than biochemistry." After that, I got really scared. I had no idea how to design a spell. Luckily, Dave was more interested in teaching me about filing, so I didn't have to worry about the spells until I was ready.

An 8-year-old finding *Dragon* in a bookstore might not be relevant to your game, even if 20 years later that 8-year-old gets to put his signature on the editorial page of issue #300. But you found *Dragon* too. It's not every day that a centennial issue rolls around, and they don't happen at all without readers finding and growing with the magazine. So send us a note. We'd love to hear how, when, or why you started reading *Dragon*, and what you'd like to see in the next 300 issues. For starters, I promise new spells.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

# READERS TALK BACK
# SCALE MAIL

In the last few months, *Dragon Magazine* has undergone a significant change—a new company, Paizo Publishing, LLC., has taken over publication of the magazine from Wizards of the Coast. Issue #298 contained an update from Paizo's president, Johnny Wilson, and staff members from *Dragon*, *Dungeon*, and *Polyhedron* have tried to answer questions in online forums and by email, but it's hard to get the answers to everyone, so most of the letters we get are naturally still questions about the new publisher, the future of the magazine, and so on. Obviously this is a milestone issue, so rather than quote individual reader's questions, we've devoted the first portion of the letters column to a short FAQ. Rest assured that the letters will be back to normal next month, and don't forget to let us know what you think of the new issue and the new company.

How do I contact *Dragon Magazine*?

*For subscription problems, email* ***dragon@pcspublishing.com.***

*For letters and general questions, email* ***scalemail@paizopublishing.com.***

*For article proposals, email* ***dragon@paizopublishing.com.***

*Dragon Magazine* has always been known as the official Dungeons & Dragons magazine. Now that you are no longer with Wizards of the Coast, will you maintain your "official" status?

*We're still the official Dungeons & Dragons magazine (along with our companion publication, Dungeon Magazine). Paizo licenses the magazine titles from Wizards, and we're required to maintain an active relationship with both the business and R&D teams so that they ensure we're honoring the terms of the deal. Although we can't, for obvious reasons, disclose the terms of the agreement, both companies are committed to keeping Dragon and Dungeon as official representatives of the Dungeons & Dragons brand.*

I subscribed to *Dragon Magazine* rather than some other gaming publications because of your connection with the Dungeons & Dragons R&D team and your advance knowledge of what products or changes were being made. I'm concerned that since you aren't a part of the same company as the R&D team, you won't have this same knowledge and connection.

*In many ways, we have as close a relationship with Wizards of the Coast as we did when we were sitting in the same building, and in some ways it's closer. Of course, we can't crush 'em in foosball as readily, but representatives from R&D still see every article. We still participate in Wizards' in-house playtests, play in home campaigns with R&D folks, and talk with R&D members on a daily basis to make sure that we have access to new rules interpretations, new errata, and the latest information on product schedules and the like.*

*As letters in past issues have mentioned, many readers would prefer support material for a new product to come out after (rather than shortly before) the product's release, and that's a desire we'll try to meet. We will also endeavor to cover what's hot in D&D and provide players and DMs with material that they can use in their games. Sometimes what's hot is the supplement that's just about to release, so these two desires compete with each other, and so in the next few months you'll see us refine our approach to support articles and themes, but the guiding goal of Dragon, providing useful game content, won't change.*

I enjoy reading the *Dragon* message boards from time to time, to learn what the buzz is on certain issues before I purchase them. Is there a new website for *Dragon*'s message boards and for Paizo Publishing? What about your email addresses? Have these changed?

*For the foreseeable future, the forums will remain at* ***www.wizards.com.*** *The*

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**ISSUE #301**
**SWASHBUCKLERS!**

**CAMPAIGN COMPONENTS: Swashbucklers!**
**by Travis Stout with Brent Phillips-Watts**
Whether you're creating a new campaign or playing in an old one, *Dragon* gives you what you need for swashbuckling style: character types, new weapons, swashbuckling feats, stunts, duels, fencing styles, new rules for firearms, new uses for skills, and parrying rules!

**DM'S TOOLBOX: Pick Up the Pace**
**by Glen Veltum**
Turn good adventures into great ones by learning what every DM should know about pacing D&D games.

**Masterpiece Theater**
**by Tim Hitchcock with Matthew Sernett**
Beef up your bards with masterpiece performances. Like masterwork items, masterpiece performances are creations of exceptional quality. Add the great works of your game world to your bard's repertoire, or create the great works yourself!

**The Ecology of the Troll**
**by Paul Leach**
Everything you need to know about trolls: culture, characters, tactics, variants, and the strategy tips you need to defeat the warty, green horde.

**THE BESTIARY: Born Fair and Foul**
**by Gwendolyn F.M. Kestrel**
This month's "Bestiary" features new fey to add to your game, but you'll find no giggling pixies in *Dragon*. Check out the changeling, the force of nature, and the unseelie template!

Inside you'll also find new fiction from Paul Kemp, "The Play's the Thing," "Bazaar of the Bizarre," "Elminster's Guide to the Realms," "Silicon Sorcery: Neverwinter Nights," and more advice, tools, and tactics to improve your game!



*editorial staff checks those boards every day, and they are a great way to ask questions or discuss ideas from the magazines. In the long term, it's likely that Paizo's website will expand to include message boards and other features, and we'll keep everyone well informed should such change come along.*

*By the way, if you don't participate in the message board discussions yet, you should. We'd especially like to hear from folks who find interesting or innovative ways to include the material from the magazine in their campaigns.*

The fiction has always been one of my favorite parts of your magazine, and I'd like to submit some of my own stories for possible publication. How do I do this?

*We're still struggling a bit to get the word out on this one, but* Dragon *no longer accepts unsolicited fiction. Astute readers will remember this from issue #299's "Scale Mail" column, but it's important to us that readers understand that this isn't a decision we made lightly.*

*As much as we like to encourage new writers and to make the readership feel like they participate in the production of the magazine, the fact remains that* Dragon *is not a publication geared toward the discovery of new fiction writers. Our specialty, of course, is D&D, and there's no better place to begin participating in the roleplaying industry; we want our fans who have a desire to write to focus on the game that has been with the magazine for 300 issues.*

*Speaking of ways to participate in the magazine, the writer's guidelines are undergoing some revisions, but for now, you can refer to the old guidelines posted on the Wizards of the Coast website.*

Congratulations on your 300th issue, *Dragon!* With other landmark issues, you've implemented changes to the magazine's format and content. Do you have plans to continue that trend? If so, what kind of changes can I expect? I'm pretty happy with *Dragon* as it is, and as they say, "Why mess with a good thing?"

*Dragon is doing great right now, and we're not going to stray from the philosophy of doing one thing well. That thing, of course, is support and expand the Dungeons & Dragons game. Each month, you'll get a sizable chunk of the new D&D material you expect from* Dragon. *That said, no one, least of all the staff, wants the magazine to stagnate, so you'll continue to see new ideas make their way into the magazine. Some, like the "For Your Character" sidebars will show up every issue, others, like the "Campaign Components" series, will show up only once every few issues, and still others will simply be one-time features.*

I just subscribed to *Dragon*, and so far, I've been really happy with the content. In some of the articles, you've referred to content in past issues that sounds really cool! I'd like to get my hands on some of these issues, but I've tried calling around to the game stores in my area, and no one has any of them. Do you sell back issues? If so, how do I order them?

*We ran our first back issue sales ad in issue #299, and it's in this issue as well. It's not our intent to limit back issue sales to customers who also buy the new issues, so in the near future, there should be additional back issues available through the Paizo website.*

*Dragon Magazine* usually focuses specifically on the Dungeons & Dragons game. I always assumed this was because you were a part of Wizards of the Coast and couldn't provide content for games published by other companies because of the obvious business conflict. Since this has changed and your new company doesn't produce any games, will the magazine start supporting other roleplaying games?

*Dragon will remain focused solely on Dungeons & Dragons. That said, you will see an increase in the amount of Open Game Content published (since there's been none so far, of course, it's pretty easy to increase). Other d20 products, those compatible with the D&D game, might see some support or synergy with* Dragon. *Should either of these possible changes come along, however, they'll be short-term experiments designed to see*

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ZOGONIA
I CAN'T DECIDE WHAT I HATED MOST ABOUT THAT DUNGEON... THE LAME TREASURE, OR ALL THE STUPID MONSTERS EAGER TO FIGHT TO THE DEATH!
NOT TO MENTION ALL THE FILTH EVERYWHERE!! I MEAN, GEEZ... YOU'D THINK THE EVIL CLERIC WHO CONSTRUCTED THAT DUNGEON WOULD AT LEAST HAVE THE DECENCY AND SELF-RESPECT TO TOSS IN A GELATINOUS CUBE TO KEEP THE HALLWAYS CLEAN!
SO... WHAT DID YOU HATE MOST ABOUT THE DUNGEON?
UMM.... BEING KILLED.
WHINE WHINE WHINE
BY TONY MOSELEY

*whether you, as a reader, like such material and find it useful. So no, we won't be supporting other games, but there's a growing d20 industry out there, and* DRAGON *has an active and cooperative part to play in it. This is a tricky decision, and we'd love to hear your thoughts on what the future should hold for* DRAGON.

My friends and I take turns running new campaigns every few months, and my turn is coming up. I'd like to throw a new campaign world at my players, but since I'm in school, it's hard to find the time to make a new world all by myself. In the past, *DRAGON* has published small campaign worlds (like the dark ages campaign from issue #290), and I'm curious if you'll be doing anything like this again soon.

*Yes and no. We've got plans to present two campaign settings in the magazine next year, but it would be premature at this point to describe those ideas. You will see more things like the "Campaign Components: Knights" from issue #299 that should help you, and don't forget about the mini-games that appear in each issue of* POLYHEDRON. *Both of those resources should provide you with a steady stream of interesting campaign ideas.*

It seems like there are a few features missing from the magazine these days. For example, it seems like you've cut back on the amount of cartoons over the last year, and some regular features, like "Wyrm's Turn" and "Sage Advice," are a little smaller than they used to be. Some things, like "Faiths of Faerûn," seem to have gone away completely. I'm worried that you'll continue to trim things from the magazine until I'm not happy with the product.

*You needn't worry on that front. In each of the examples mentioned, we made changes to give us more flexibility in the part of the magazine we call the feature well. As you can probably guess, the feature well is the central portion of the magazine that holds the longest articles and provides the most useful content to the reader. We haven't reduced the page count, edit or art budgets, or in any way changed the approach we take to making the magazine; we simply want to be able to present more useful content with as much cool art as possible. None of those features are gone from the magazine either—the publishing world is one of constant change, and although none of the features have been removed from the magazine by the editorial team, for one reason or another it has proven difficult to get material.*

## Minor Mistake

I saw there was a letter about "The Tomb" in *DRAGON* #298, and you'd replied that the Harold Godwinson stories were set in the same world as my Oath of Empire books.

Not so!

Both series are set in the Middle East (more or less) but entirely different worlds—mainly for legal reasons, as St. Martin's Press owns the subrights for Oath, and I needed a new, different world I could sell modules and short-stories out of, thus Crusader Earth.

**Thomas Harlan • Address withheld**

*Thanks for the clarification, Thomas. Like the readers, we're looking forward to the next Crusader Earth story.*

## Dastardly Drow

I am overjoyed at what you have done for the drow in issue #298. I admit that when I first heard you were doing an issue dedicated to the drow, I was afraid that it would be an issue catering exclusively to those Drizzt wanna-be players. But then I began to read the issue and was pleasantly repulsed by the drow. To think of unborn twins fighting for the right to be born and drow males being sacrificed if they have an affair—that's the kind of atrocities I imagine the drow committing. The article on their poisons and instruments of pain and death was also great.

I would be pleased if a majority of readers were upset or disturbed by the images of the drow that this issue evoked, as drow are meant to be the perfect antagonists. Drizzt is special not because he is drow, but rather, because he is a noble soul born of drow! Huzzah to *DRAGON* for doing the right thing with the drow and reminding us that the hatred and fear that the good races feel toward the drow is well deserved. This issue alone was worth my two-year subscription.

**Trevor Chapman • Address withheld**

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D&D PREVIEWS

OCTOBER

**BOOK OF VILE DARKNESS**
A D&D accessory by Monte Cook
$32.95/$45.95 CAN
ISBN: 0-7869-2650-3

**DIVINE HAMMER**
A DRAGONLANCE novel by Chris Pierson
$6.99/$9.99 CAN
ISBN: 0-7869-1902-7

**THE THOUSAND ORCS**
A FORGOTTEN REALMS novel by R.A. Salvatore
$25.95/$35.95 CAN
ISBN: 0-7869-2804-2

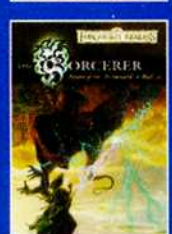
NOVEMBER

**BERTREM'S GUIDE TO THE WAR OF SOULS, VOLUME II**
A DRAGONLANCE anthology by Steven Brown, Mary H. Herbert, and Don Perrin
$6.99/$9.99 CAN
ISBN: 0-7869-2816-6

**CITY OF FIRE**
A D&D novel by T. H. Lain
$5.99/$7.99 CAN
ISBN: 0-7869-2854-9

**D20 MODERN ROLEPLAYING GAME**
A D&D roleplaying game by Bill Slavicsek, Jeff Grubb, and Rich Redman
$39.95/$55.95 CAN
ISBN: 0-7869-2836-0

**THE SORCERER**
A FORGOTTEN REALMS novel by Troy Denning
$6.99/$9.99 CAN
ISBN: 0-7869-2795-x




[ SCALE MAIL ]

*Thanks. The response to the drow issue has been outstanding. Many readers have commented on Robin Laws's take on drow, and it's clear that readers respond to evil. Since this issue is chock full of evil too, we'll concentrate on the good guys for a few issues, but look for more evil in the future.*

## Hot Stuff

I found the discussion of product-themed issues in *DRAGON* #299 a little disappointing. The editor seems to equate "what's hot in the D&D world" with what's on the Wizards of the Coast release schedule. Now that *DRAGON* is technically an independent entity and not owned by Wizards, is there any chance we'll see some coverage of non-Wizards d20 products?

Ernest Mueller
Address withheld

*Although this question was partially addressed in the FAQ, it bears more explanation. You should first realize our desire to serve our readership and simultaneously realize that our readership consists of D&D players in many, many campaign worlds. Presenting too much setting-specific content has rarely been well received in the magazine. Some readers complain about how much FORGOTTEN REALMS and GREYHAWK content is in the magazine, and these two settings are undoubtedly the most popular. That said, DRAGON is committed to supporting and showcasing new ideas that make D&D and the d20 system fun. You won't see articles that talk about games other than D&D, but you should see occasional articles that support innovative rules from other companies. I want to be extra clear here, so forgive a bit of repetition: This content will be d20 fantasy roleplaying content that's relevant to any D&D game or setting. Just like it doesn't make sense for us to stray from D&D, it doesn't make sense for us to ignore great ideas just because they come from a company other than Wizards of the Coast.*

*In light of this new policy, I encourage readers to bring innovative ideas to our attention and to propose articles that take those innovations and make them work for any D&D game. In all cases, we'll comply with the Open Gaming License, and the content presented this way will always be open, and as always, the open portions of the articles will be very clearly labeled.* D

## CAPTION CONTEST

What's so funny? Why, you are! So send your caption for this cartoon to **Caption/DRAGON Magazine, 3245 146th Pl. SE Suite 110 Bellevue, WA 98007** by October 1st, and be sure to write "issue #299" somewhere on your entry. Your caption will undergo rigorous testing by the editors, and if it passes, it just might be printed in an upcoming issue. There's no need to cut up your magazine. If you want to include the drawing, send in a photocopy.

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### PORPHYRY HOUSE HORROR
**by James Jacobs**
Something dark is brewing in Scuttlecove—something dark enough to make even this evil city's inhabitants nervous. "Porphyry House Horror" is an adventure intended to be used with the new *Book of Vile Darkness*. Intended for mature audiences, this 32-page adventure will be presented in a special sealed section of issue #95. "Porphyry House Horror" is a D&D adventure for four 10th-level characters.

### THE WITCH OF SERPENT BRIDGE
**by Russell Brown**
A reclusive wise woman is suspected of sabotage and murder, but is she guilty or simply being set up while real danger threatens elsewhere? "The Witch of Serpent Bridge" is a D&D adventure for four 3rd-level characters.

### THE JACKAL'S REDEMPTION
**by Chad Macphee and Greg Oppedisano**
The Jackal once protected the city of Halea's Reach, but now he and his new bride have disappeared, and so have citizens of this small village. "The Jackal's Redemption" is a D&D adventure for four 9th-level characters.

### HOLLOW THREATS
**by Richard L. J. Pett**
A dragon turtle has been sighted near several small hamlets along the coast, and now it's approaching the village in which the PCs have taken refuge. Is this wild story true? If it is, who can stop the wandering monster? "Hollow Threats" is a D&D adventure for four 1st-level characters.

### LUST
**by J. Bradley Schell**
Denizens of the forest have been turning up dead. The strange thing about the deaths is that the creatures—animals, men, and woman—always seem to have slain each other in gory, vicious combat. "Lust" is a D&D adventure for four 4th-level characters.

# UP ON A SOAPBOX

## All I Need to Know I learned from D&D

# The Incomplete Villain

by Gary Gygax © 2001 Gary Gygax. All rights reserved.

The genesis of Wastri, known as the Hopping Prophet, can only be termed low. It was very early in the 1970s, and the story in which he was to play the role of the main antagonist was in the process of being written . . . badly. The story for which Wastri was created was never published, but the concept of a cult leader of his sort was (and still is) a choice form of mine, and as for the actual character, the Hopping Prophet is my favorite unrealized villain. Lack of good character and moral fiber hardly begin to describe Wastri.

Wastri was a sort of zealot, a man bent on finding the path of spiritual perfection through isolation, privation, and meditation. In this he was encouraged by all who met him, for he was unpleasant and out of place in any normal society. It was as much ostracizing as choice that sent the zealous seeker forth to find the path to his "enlightenment." The religious hermit found what he was seeking in a vast wilderness of mires and marsh. The experience was not at all what he'd expected. Wastri found he disliked being alone, so he made friends with the denizens of the swamp and sought converts—simply because he wanted the company of servants. Instead of contemplating the mysteries and seeking a greater truth, this fellow grew bored, since all he discovered within himself was shallowness.

The community of his followers grew, and as things developed, Wastri's main interest centered on the first friends he'd made in the bogs, the giant toads. Over the course of decades, the Hopping Prophet grew more powerful, even as he and his faithful following assimilated certain characteristics of a strange sort as a result of their mingling.

To this day, Wastri has continued to evolve to a point where he is no longer human. He is greater in power, certainly, but less than human in his form and habits.

Although treated to some extent as a demi-god in the GREYHAWK setting, the full character of Wastri has not been brought to light, nor many of his villainies detailed. Without doubt, the claim made by him and his cult for human superiority is spurious, for they revile the human and exalt the batrachian. The demi-human as an inferior worthy only of death is clearly only a ploy to attract followers prejudiced against such races. The true initiates know that the Hopping Prophet has a grander motive: The extinction of humans as they exist in favor of the model based on his form, that of the hybrid of toad and man.

Wastri was meant to be a super-genius sending forth his minions to accomplish his end, but the capacities of this depraved creature have not yet been realized. Is this the end of Wastri? Is he to be relegated to a minor villain, his influence extending no further than the local marsh? I should hope not! This corrupt demi-god is capable of being a force that threatens all corners of Oerth.

In one city, there's a group of new residents, all of whom have a strange gait, who are close to inciting a riot against the city's wealthy dwarves.

Elsewhere, a powerful new guild has sprung up, and its membership and influence is growing.

Have you heard of the recent deaths of many renowned mages? These "accidents" have occurred in all corners of Oerth. The deaths are certainly suspicious, since all were known to have been researching and developing powerful new magics.

Is there a singular sinister hand behind all of this? Possibly, but it cannot be that of the Hopping Prophet, as all know that Wastri remains isolated in his remote and watery wastes. . . . D

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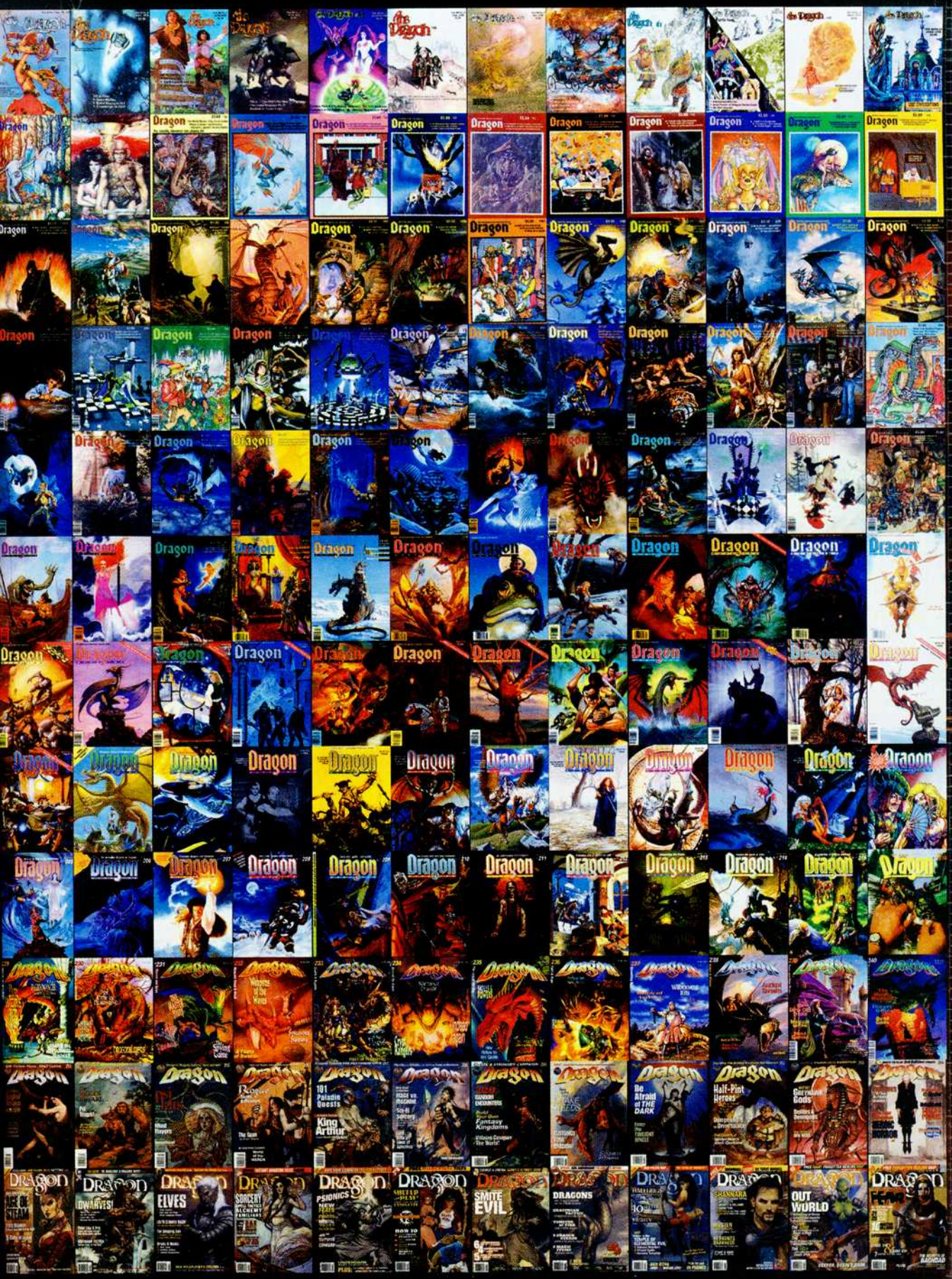
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## THE OLDEN DAYS

**By Kim Mohan**

So, you want know what it was like in the olden days? Pull up a chair, and I'll tell you some tales. Most of them are even true.

Back when I was a young'un, 'round about 23 years ago, I went to work for *The Dragon*. Yep, you heard me– *The Dragon*. Weren't no such thing as *Dragon Magazine* back then. That was a name we had to grow into, I guess.

And grow we did. In the early days, working for the magazine was like riding a rocket, and the name of that rocket was D&D. When the game took off in the early '80s, *Dragon* took right off with it–and being along on that ride was a whole lot of fun.

But the times were different. When we put those early issues together, we didn't have it near as easy as the young'uns today. Oh, we had a computer, all right–a little something called a TRS-80 that sat in a room upstairs for whenever we felt like playing a game of *Pong*. But the idea of making a magazine with a computer was a few years away.

So, instead, we sent out manuscripts–articles actually typed on paper!–and had them set in type. We had the type sent back in big, long strips of paper, and we had to trim out those strips and stick them to pieces of cardboard that represented each page of the magazine. We used hot wax to stick the type to the boards (as the cardboard was called, predictably enough). It was a good adhesive because you could peel up the type and reposition it if you didn't get it in the right spot on the first try. When our hot wax machine went down, we were in a lot of trouble–couldn't do a thing 'till it got fixed or replaced.

Today you don't need a hot wax machine to make a magazine, you need a computer. But what do they do when that computer goes down? Might as well be a hot wax machine for all the good it's doing you then.

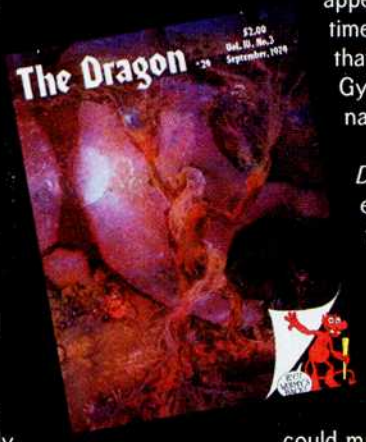
We had a subscriber database, except ours was on a set of file cards. And we had a subscription fulfillment house, but it was a little different from the system they've got now: Once a month, when the new magazines came in from the printer, the whole staff would gather in the basement of the Dungeon Hobby Shop. We stuck labels on brown paper wrappers, put magazines inside the wrappers, and bundled them according to ZIP code before lugging them down to the post office. Now that's how to fulfill a subscription, darn it.

When somebody painted us a picture for a cover or did some drawings to illustrate an article, they sent in the actual paintings and drawings. We never had to worry about a file getting corrupted or accidentally deleted–we always knew right where that artwork was, more or less. (Because our offices weren't very organized, we did have to worry about things like accidentally setting a coffee cup down on next month's cover. If we didn't know where that cover was before . . .)

For a few years, we made magazines the old-fashioned way–except it wasn't old-fashioned then. And we loved doing it. We were on a roll, so was *Dragon*, and most of all, so was D&D.

### From Humble Beginnings

When I came aboard in 1979, the world headquarters of Dragon Publishing was a stately yet run-down wood frame house at 723 Williams street in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. Our offices were converted living quarters and bedrooms–the building was not designed to be a place of business. Our security system was a squeaky front step–you could always tell when someone was coming in (well, as long as you were already inside). It wasn't much, but it was ours.




A little more than 20 years ago, the popularity of Dungeons & Dragons started to streak upward. I won't go into why this happened; other people have written books about it. I will say that it was an absolute blast being involved with *Dragon Magazine* during that time. I don't remember dates or numbers, but for what seemed like a pretty long time, the game kept selling more and more, and *Dragon*'s circulation kept rising every month. Life was good.

When I think about the real high points of this period of *Dragon*'s existence, I think in terms of issue numbers, not dates on the calendar. The first milestone for me was issue #29, when my name appeared in the masthead for the first time, and the next one was issue #30, which contained the first piece of writing with my name on it–a newcomer's look at the latest Gen Con Game Fair, which in those bygone days was held at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside.

I was indeed a newcomer. When I started at *Dragon*, I didn't know Hit Dice from fried rice. What I did bring to the mix was about 10 years of experience as a newspaper editor and the ability to tell if the writer of an article really knew what he was talking about. I spent a lot of time with the 1st Edition AD&D hardcovers, reading and absorbing and discovering all the nuances of the world's greatest roleplaying game. I quickly learned to appreciate and respect the creativity of the writers who appeared in *Dragon*'s pages time and time again during that era–Len Lakofka, Gary Gygax, and Tom Wham, to name just a few.

Although it's true that *Dragon*'s success in the early years was tightly tied to the D&D craze that was sweeping the world, we were never content with just going along for the ride. We wanted to make the best magazine we could make, to keep our dedicated readers happy and also to help bring other people into the game after they discovered *Dragon* on the shelf at their neighborhood bookstore or hobby shop.

The key to any magazine's success on the newsstand is what's on the cover, and we had some marvelous eye-catching cover art back then. Issue #48 featured a painting by Tim Hildebrandt, one of the pioneers of modern-day fantasy illustration. We commissioned a cover by Boris Vallejo that ended up on issue #52. Clyde Caldwell and Keith Parkinson did covers for *Dragon* before they came to work for TSR and went on to become stars of the genre.

## The Joy of Discovery

My favorite artist story involves a guy who sent in some samples of his work while he was employed by the U.S. Army in Kentucky as a technical illustrator. We took one look and knew this was a painter we wanted to use for Days of the Dragon, the first of several calendars that Dragon Publishing produced in the early '80s. He painted a piece featuring a white dragon that was so terrific we ended up putting it on the cover of the calendar. In the two decades since then, Larry Elmore has created hundreds of illustrations for *Dragon* and for TSR game products, but still the one that sticks out for me is that first calendar piece. When Larry left TSR in the early '90s to pursue a freelance career, he made it a point to seek me out and thank me for giving him his start as a fantasy artist. I'm happy to take credit for the discovery, but to tell the truth, it was a no-brainer. He is that good.

We discovered some writers along the way, too, including a few whose influence on the D&D game will be felt forever.

One of the largest groups of D&D players in those days (and maybe still today) was the people in the U.S. armed forces around the world. An army psychologist stationed at a base in Germany started sending in some article submissions, and it was clear to me right away that not only did he know what he was talking about, he had a way of expressing himself in print that made it easy to keep reading. Roger Moore was so prolific, and so good, that I ended up offering him a position as contributing editor—a fancy-sounding title that basically meant he was supposed to write as many articles as possible, and to hold up our end of the bargain we would publish everything he sent in. (I don't remember ever turning down a manuscript Roger submitted.)

If you look back through the issues that contain Roger's early articles, you'll see a lot of ideas that eventually made their way into the game. Some of his most enduring work was the creation of pantheons for the dwarves, elves, gnomes, halflings, and orcs. If you ever wondered where deities like Moradin, Corellon Larethian, Garl Glittergold, and Yondalla came from, now you know.

When Roger left the army and returned stateside, I jumped at the opportunity to offer him a job as assistant editor, and he accepted it almost as quickly. I knew I was losing one of my most dependable writers, and he wouldn't have as much time to write his own stuff now that he was reviewing other people's manuscripts, but I had a feeling at the time that he was capable of bigger things.

Meanwhile, north of the border in a suburb of Toronto, a young librarian's assistant was putting a lot of creative energy into a campaign setting he was developing for his own game. When he started sharing some of his ideas with the readers of *Dragon*, we started to get the sense that what we were seeing was the tip of the tip of the iceberg. Back in the mid-80s, Ed Greenwood had already done more writing and mapmaking for his campaign world than we ever could have printed in the magazine—but that turned out to be just fine, because it didn't take long for his work to come to the attention of the folks at TSR who were putting out game products. TSR ended up purchasing the right to publish the Forgotten Realms as an official campaign setting for the AD&D game. And the rest, as they say, is history.

So far I've written this reminiscence without any visual aids, but now I've decided to indulge myself and pull out a copy of one of my best old friends—issue #100. Just touching the cover brings back a flood of memories. This is truly a landmark issue in the magazine's history.

Why a landmark? For one thing, we used a photograph as the cover illustration for the first time. For another, the two most important elements of the cover were embossed. The entire scene was a paper sculpture created by 3-D wizard Dennis Kauth. I remember spending the better part of an afternoon with Dennis at the photographer's studio, trying all sorts of things with lighting to get exactly the effect we wanted to bring out the image: a faerie dragon—made of paper, all the way down to the scales—floating along above the bank of a gently flowing stream.

Inside the issue was one heavy-hitting article or story after another. Some guy named Gygax was heard from twice, with a piece of short fiction and the rules for the three-dimensional boardgame he calls Dragonchess. The AD&D

adventure in the issue is "The City Beyond the Gate," one of the most extensive and most complex adventures we had ever done, which took AD&D heroes and transported them into the modern world on a quest for the missing Mace of St. Cuthbert. Ed Greenwood is represented by the fifth installment of "Pages from the Mages" (which later lent its name to a FORGOTTEN REALMS game product). For his second *DRAGON* contribution, an up-and-coming puzzle creator named Mike Selinker provided a crossword puzzle titled "Compressor" that was specially designed for issue #100.

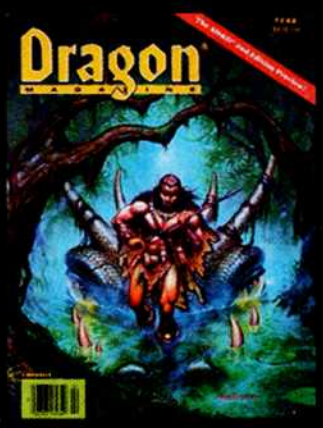
We did our best to make that landmark issue a memorable one for every reader . . . but in truth, that's the way the staff of *DRAGON* approached every issue we assembled way back when. We didn't want to let up for even one issue, because we were dedicated to getting better every month. In the years since then, *DRAGON Magazine* has changed in many ways, but not in the way that counts the most. It's nice to see, month in and month out, that the dedication is still there.

## DRAGONS OF MOORIA

**By Dale Donovan**

*DRAGON Magazine* entered triple-digits in issue numbers in August, 1985. Kim Mohan was still the editor, the game was still 1st Edition AD&D, and by that time, I'd been reading the magazine for 50 issues. I didn't know that I'd be lucky enough to join the staff of the magazine in just another 50 issues.

Issue #100 had many great features, but perhaps most important, however, was a simple name on the masthead—the man who would lead the magazine for the vast majority of the next 100 issues and give *DRAGON* a direction that led to a true Renaissance for the magazine, Roger E. Moore. Roger had joined the staff in July of 1983, and the first issue his name appeared on the masthead was #75. Roger had written prodigious amounts of material for the magazine (under his own name and several pen names, which I'm sworn by a blood oath to keep secret), and had earned the distinction—along with a certain rascal named Ed Greenwood—of being dubbed "contributing editors" by Kim. Roger was fresh out of the Army, and Kim needed help on the magazine, so fate stepped in and Roger joined the staff.




Roger edited the ARES science-fiction section of the magazine, and when TSR started *DUNGEON Adventures*, Roger was selected to head that publication as Editor. Then, suddenly, Kim left TSR. With issue #115, Roger was the Editor of both *DRAGON* and *DUNGEON* (please pardon me while I shudder at the prospect of that!).

Eventually, Roger was allowed to hire an editor to take over *DUNGEON*, which allowed Roger to return to a relatively normal workload. He hired Barbara Young from the games side of the company. Barbara soon became the fiction editor for *DRAGON* as well.

In issue #128, Rogar of Mooria, the infamous office barbarian was born. *DRAGON* Art Director Roger Raupp (who apparently didn't like having to share his first name around the office) created images of the intelligent, soft-spoken Roger as a fierce, bespectacled warrior that continued to show up in the magazine for years to come.

*DRAGON* flourished under Roger's insightful and understated sense of humor. Many famous cover artists worked for the magazine and TSR for the first time during that era: Carol Heyer, Charles Vess, Bob Eggleton, Jeff Easley, Gerald Brom, Fred Fields, and Robh Ruppel, just to name a few.

It was during this time that TSR started work on the 2nd Edition of the AD&D game, and *DRAGON* became the place to talk about it. David "Zeb" Cook wrote lots of articles about the different ways that the game could change and why it should change in this way or that. He also discussed why certain decisions had been made and how the process was proceeding. Issue #142 contained the much-anticipated "2nd Edition Preview" of the game that would be released later that year, 1989.

Another highlight of that time was issue #148, which contained actual, full-color illustrated cards that you could remove from the magazine and cut apart to use during your games. These weren't just any cards, though (and no, *Magic* was still years away from happening), these cards depicted perhaps the most notorious magic item from the AD&D game of that time: the deck of many things. That issue instantly became highly collectible and within a year or so, not even TSR had any copies lying around.

It was also about this time that I had graduated from college, and after a few months of sending out what seemed to be reams of résumés, I decided to write to a few places at which I thought it would be fun to work. I recall sending a letter and résumé to *Astronomy* magazine (since I had worked for the astronomy professor my last two years at college), one to TSR, one to *DRAGON*, and a few other places my now-36-year-old brain can no longer recall.

I knew my odds of actually working at any of these places was negligible, but just sending out the letters made me feel better and allowed me to return to looking for a "real" job. As I mailed the letter off to *Dragon*, I told myself, "You're never going to hear from any of these folks, so just forget you sent these out and get back to work." I did.

Three months later, out of the clear blue sky, Roger called me and asked if I wanted to interview for a position with the magazine. I called him back on my lunch break from my "it pays the bills until I get a real job" job and set up an interview for the next day.

I was on Cloud Nine, until I went back to work, that is. They told me I couldn't take time off to go to the interview (even though I had already arranged a dentist's appointment for that same morning, which I cancelled after getting the interview). Left with no other option, I quit on the spot, and the next morning, I went to the interview in Lake Geneva (only 30 minutes from where I grew up and was living at the time). The rest is history, right? Nope, because I didn't get the job. (Those were not a good couple of days there.) All was not lost, however, as I got another interview three months later and this one landed me the job as Roger's assistant editor. I can still recall the first duty I performed on my first day as a professional editor was to send out rejection letters—a great big stack of them.

The first issue with my name on the masthead was #151, one of the "Oriental issues." (I always loved doing the cultural articles in the magazine.) I learned a lot from Roger, Barbara, and the woman who'd gotten the job the first time I interviewed and who was now jumping to the Games side of the company, Anne Brown. Roger and the others made me feel a welcome part of the Periodicals family.

I recall issue #154 being done and ready to go to the printers, except that the cover artist had yet to send in the cover art for the issue. It arrived a week late as I recall, and for a "name" artist, it was mediocre at best.

I remember barely surviving some of Roger's "mild" chili at a Halloween chili cook-off at the office.

I also recall Roger "adopting" a soft-sculpture manikin that had been created for some unknown reason by one of TSR's botched West Coast offices (yes, there was more than one over the years), naming him "Bud," fitting him with a pair of Roger's own glasses from the Army (you know, the big, black plastic framed jobs that made everyone who wore them look like a geek), and allowing us, the rest of the staff to abuse poor Bud in any number of ways over the years. Many of Bud's tribulations were documented by Roger in his editorials.

The magazine continued to grow during this time, swelling to 120 pages per issue. The staff covered the creation and launch of many famous campaign settings during the Renaissance of the AD&D game's 2nd Edition: *Ravenloft* (out a full year before White Wolf released *Vampire*, by the way), *Spelljammer*, *Dark Sun*, *Al-Qadim*, *Planescape*, *Birthright*, and the conversion of *Mystara* from the D&D game's setting to a world for the AD&D game. (Ask me sometime about the Dana Carvey promo video TSR created the year *Al-Qadim* was released. I'll pay anybody $100 for a copy of that video.)

Art Director Larry Smith began his 10-year tenure with *Dragon* in 1990, and in 1991, we were able to hire Barbara Young an assistant for *Dungeon* (to this day, the best value in the industry for tons of quality adventures), and Wolfgang Baur signed on.

The five of us just seemed to go on for years, having fun and working to put out the best magazines we could. But, as they say, nothing lasts forever. In the fall of 1993, Roger accepted a position in the Games Department as the Creative Director in charge of the core AD&D game line. He announced his transfer with issue #199, and the last issue his name appears in as editor was the whopping, 160-something-page issue #200. We had been working on that special issue for months, and it was a fitting farewell to the man who had been the heart and soul of *Dragon* for over 10 years.

## THE TERRIBLE TWO-HUNDREDS

**By Dave Gross**

The first time I applied for a job with TSR, I didn't get it.

Perhaps it had something to do with the James W. Ward typo on the envelope. More likely, the powers that be weren't interested in fetching an English instructor all the way from Virginia when there were so many experienced candidates in the Midwest.

The rejection was disappointing, since like most gamers I'd dreamed of working on the inside of the D&D company. Unlike most gamers, I was more interested in editing the magazine than writing the rules. To me, the only thing that could be better than reading *Dragon* was working on it. I envied not Gary Gygax but Kim Mohan—whom I also assumed was a woman, so don't feel too bad about that mistake. Once I met him, I saw that he's as manly as they come, and very old.

So I went back to teaching and gave it no more thought, even during my marathon D&D games each weekend—until someone sent me a want ad for a job at *Polyhedron*.

"It's not *Dragon*," I thought, "but it sure beats grading papers."

Of course, soon I learned that editing game articles is a lot like grading papers. Still, I was getting paid to play my favorite game, and being inside TSR brought me that much closer to *Dragon*.

The second time I applied for a job at TSR came a couple of years later, when Dale Donovan moved to R&tD and left the *Dragon* spot open.

I didn't get the job that time, either.

On the other hand, I got a terrific consolation prize. While Wolf Baur took over the helm of *Dragon*, I joined the periodicals staff as the editor of *Dungeon*.

After Wolf moved on, I figured my chance had come. Third time's the charm, right?

The interview consisted of a single question: "Is it better to marry your dead wife's sister or an entirely unrelated woman?"

Now let me tell you, I gave that question a lot of thought. I realized it was allegorical. Trouble was, I wasn't sure I understood it. After long consideration, I said I'd have to pass on the sister and go for the whole new woman.

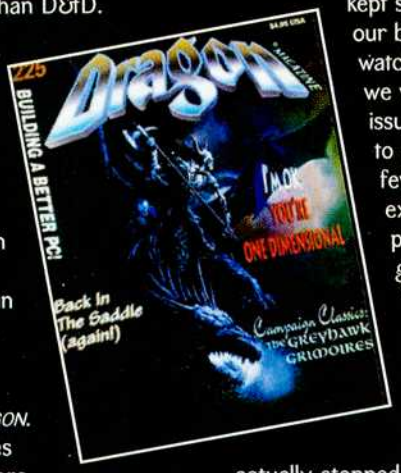
And, of course, I didn't get the job.

Let's cut to the chase. Eventually, patience and perseverance won out. That is, when the music that had been playing for the past year finally stopped, I was the only editor left with a chair.

But enough about me.

## Back to Basics, Part I

With *Dragon* #225, Tony Bryant began taking the magazine back to its D&tD roots with articles on NPCs, lots of new monsters, spells, and magic items—and fewer articles on games other than D&tD.




At the time, I must confess, I was not entirely on board the new *Dragon* train. Even before I'd fallen in love with small-press games, I was a fan of other systems and settings. I wanted to see diversity in *Dragon*. I wanted vampires and shadowrunners and bespectacled professors fleeing screaming into the night after opening some ineffable tome. I loved D&tD, too—in fact, it was still my favorite game—but I wanted to see a little bit of everything in *Dragon*.

However, I also saw what happened to magazines that tried to cover many different roleplaying games. "Look at the bones!" someone whispered as we watched one after another RPG magazine fail that last saving throw.

The problem was that in trying to please everyone, these magazines were pleasing no one enough to shell out the bucks each month. A fan of *Paranoia* might find a single article to use in her game, while a fan of *The Whispering Vault* might go for a year with no support.

The trick, I finally realized, was to do one thing very well all the time. And since there were more players of D&tD than any other game, the choice wasn't a hard one to make.

Converted at last, I was a fully indoctrinated member of the team, joining Brian Thomsen, Pierce Watters, Larry Smith, Michelle Vuckovich, and Lizz Baldwin on a mission of refining *Dragon* to become the ultimate D&tD magazine. We began turning all our efforts in that direction, and our hopes were rising that we were on the right track.

Then TSR blew up.

## The Dark Times

For a long time, we didn't know what was going on. Our budget kept shrinking, and then our bosses wanted to watch exactly how much we were spending each issue. We were allowed to make fewer and fewer changes to the expensive galley proofs. Eventually we got down to the "death or lawsuit" criterion that Kim Mohan had established centuries earlier. Then the magazine actually stopped printing, and we had to wonder whether that was the end for *Dragon*, if not all of TSR.

Months crawled by as the executives hid the FAX machines in their offices and held private phone conferences. We worker bees had lots of articles on hand, but we weren't allowed to buy them. We edited everything we had. We planned new issues. We grew to fear the phone calls from angry readers who demanded answers we ourselves did not have. We played a lot of *Lunch Money* until the cards creeped out the book department. We switched to *Trivial Pursuit*, and Pierce and I kicked everyone's asses.

Eventually we just kind of sat around and hoped for a miracle.

After seven months of uncertainty, that miracle arrived in the form of Peter Adkison, whose company hit it big a few years earlier with a little card game. We'd heard that Peter was a big D&tD fan, but we feared he might snap up the license and let us all go. It sure would have been a lot cheaper for him to do so. As everyone knows now, Peter was our white knight, spiriting us out of chilly Wisconsin to the green hills of Seattle with better pay and free popcorn.

Peter also seemed really interested in *Dragon*. In fact, he wanted his own column.

I knew there had to be a catch to this amazing rescue, and I braced myself. For an editor, nothing is worse than having your boss write for you. How can you tell the guy who signs your paycheck that his prose stinks or that his heartfelt argument makes no sense?

Peter dispelled all those concerns by showing very quickly that he knew gaming, took criticism well, and rose to any challenge an editor could give him. Better yet, he loved D&tD and *Dragon* even more than anyone realized. When we explained that we used so much black and white art because of our budget, our budget increased. When internal politics interfered with our ability to put out a great magazine, he sorted them out. When he had a good idea for *Dragon*, he didn't force it on us but offered it as a suggestion—and it was always a suggestion worth considering.

"Wouldn't it be nice to have a column by Gary Gygax?" he said one day. He even made a deal with Gary that included contributing to

the magazine—if we wanted him to do so.

He didn't have to ask us twice.

And then we really began to get back to basics.

## Back to Basics, Part II

Apart from the advantages of more money and a game geek for a company president, we had a couple of secret weapons after the move to Wizards of the Coast.

The first was Christopher Perkins, the most prolific contributor to *Dungeon Adventures*, and indisputably one of the best. Just as Old Man Mohan had qualms about hiring Roger Moore and losing one of his best contributors, so too were we nervous about taking Chris out of the writing pool. It was well worth the risk, and Chris soon became a one-man-band on *Dungeon* as well as an active associate and pinch-hitting writer for *Dragon*. With the addition of Jesse Decker as editorial assistant, we had the perfect team. Each of us was a nerdy kid when D&D came out, and we had remained game geeks ever since. The only trouble was that Chris and Jesse couldn't stop arguing over which of them was the world's greatest DM.

Our second secret weapon was something we suspected since the moment Peter bought TSR. It was time for a new edition of D&D, one that brought back the atmosphere of the original while pushing its game mechanics to the cutting edge.

For a year before the announcement of 3rd Edition, we considered ways in which the magazine could take advantage of it. Starting over meant that all of the classic *Dragon* articles were fair game again. It also meant that gamers would want and need guidance on using the new rules to create their own monsters, spells, magic items—and a couple of new mechanics, like feats and prestige classes. Suddenly it made sense to do an all-fighter issue, something we'd thought was too basic before. With races and classes alone, we had almost two years of content even without dipping into the "exotic" rules like psionics and high-level campaigns.

Just like the 3rd Edition designers, the *Dragon* staff looked back at our favorite elements of the first 100 issues for inspiration. With contributions from Gary Gygax and Roger Moore, we were off to a great start. But there was something else we all loved about the original *Dragon*: the cartoons.

Our gentleman's agreement not to steal Phil Foglio away from *Duelist* died with that magazine, so "Phil and Dixie" made their triumphant return to *Dragon*. Aaron Williams took his "Nodwick" gang through the classic D&D modules to herald the 25th Anniversary of D&D and the coming new edition, and John Kovalic rounded out the funny with his award-winning "Dork Tower."

While we couldn't be more proud of our contributors, we prayed that the readers would be as excited about the new edition as we were. To test the waters, we started a "Countdown to 3rd Edition." The response was staggering, not just in terms of letters and Internet messages, but also in a steadily increasing readership. Pierce got *Dragon* into newsstands and even corner grocery stores. Production Director John Dunn secured better prices and improved the production cycle. Art Director Larry Smith retired to run a seaside hotel and handed the reins to Peter Whitley, who gave *Dragon* a spiky new look that took the 3rd Edition design sensibilities and pushed them even further.

The most crucial contribution came from outside the magazine staff. During the year between the initial playtest version and the publication of 3rd Editon D&D and *Dragon* #274, thousands of gamers wrote in to share their opinions. Many of those letters had a big effect on the final version of the game, and many more influenced the content of *Dragon Magazine*. While a few long-time fans lamented the passing of reviews and coverage of other games, far more new readers subscribed, and hundreds of disillusioned veterans cited the focus on D&D as the reason for their return.

The next couple of years were pure joy for us geek editors. How could it get any better than that?

Chris and I—being clever, selfish fellows—decided that it was time to move on while *Dragon* was at its peak. Sure, it would be nice to be on staff when the magazine reached its 300th issue, but who wanted to take a chance that its popularity would wane?

It was a good plan. And it would have worked, too, if it weren't for those darned kids.

Jesse Decker, Matthew Sernett, and Stacie Magelssen have been proving over the past year that *Dragon* has so far only scratched the surface of the new D&D game. As the time since my last issue continues to pass, I'm beginning to see that there's only one thing better than working on *Dragon* these days, and that's reading it.

# Hellish Fangs on Abyssal Wings

by James Wyatt · illustrated by Sam Wood

Demons and angels tremble before them. Devils and gods covet their treasures. Few doubt that dragons represent the greatest native threat to creatures on the Material Plane, but even fewer suspect that similar threats exist in other parts of the cosmos. The fiendish dragons of the Lower Planes are more than émigrés from the Material Plane; they are indigenous species, twisted pieces of the evil planes they inhabit.

## DRAGON, FIENDISH

At least five varieties of fiendish dragons are known to haunt the Lower Planes, each one native to a different plane. Oddly, the Nine Hells of Baator and the Infinite Layers of the Abyss are not known to possess native dragon species, perhaps because the devils and demons that inhabit those planes are too numerous and powerful for dragons to thrive. The other lower planes, however—from Acheron to Pandemonium—are home to the five draconic varieties described here.

Although native to the Outer Planes, fiendish dragons have been found on the Material Plane. While certainly the dragons could have found a means to travel to the Material Plane, some sages suspect that the chromatic dragons have some means of summoning or calling the creatures to do their bidding on the Material. If true, such magic is thankfully rare or quite new.

As with the chromatic and metallic species, fiendish dragons gain more abilities and greater power as they age. They range in length from several feet upon hatching to more than 100 feet after attaining the status of great wyrm. The exact size varies according to age and variety.

**DRAGON AGE CATEGORIES**

| Category | Age | Years |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Wyrmling | 0-5 |
| 2 | Very young | 6-15 |
| 3 | Young | 16-25 |
| 4 | Juvenile | 26-50 |
| 5 | Young adult | 51-100 |
| 6 | Adult | 101-200 |
| 7 | Mature adult | 201-400 |
| 8 | Old | 401-600 |
| 9 | Very old | 601-800 |
| 10 | Ancient | 801-1,000 |
| 11 | Wyrm | 1,001-1,200 |
| 12 | Great wyrm | 1,201+ |

### Combat

Fiendish dragons follow the same rules for facing, reach, physical attacks, breath weapons, frightful presence, and spell-like abilities as described for dragons in the *Monster Manual*. They have the standard dragon immunities, blindsight, darkvision, and keen senses, and they have the scent ability with a range of 30 feet times their age category. For a full description of the capabilities of dragons, see the *Monster Manual*.

**Extraplanar:** This subtype can be applied to any creature on a plane other than its native plane. A creature that travels the planes can gain or lose this subtype as it goes from plane to plane. This article assumes encounters with the fiendish dragons take place on the Material Plane. Every extraplanar creature in this article has a home plane mentioned in its description. These home planes are taken from the Great Wheel cosmology of the D&D game. If your campaign uses a different cosmology, you will need to assign different home planes to extraplanar creatures. On certain planes, called transitive planes, no creatures have the extraplanar subtype. The known transitive planes in the Great Wheel cosmology include the Astral Plane, the Ethereal Plane, and the Plane of Shadow.

## HOWLING DRAGON
## DRAGON (EXTRAPLANAR)

**Climate/Terrain:** Any land and underground (Pandemonium)
**Organization:** Solitary (1 dragon, any age), clutch (1d4+1 wyrmlings, very young, young, juvenile, or young adults), family (pair of mature adults and 1d4+1 offspring)
**Challenge Rating:** Wyrmling 5; very young 8; young 10; juvenile 12; young adult 14; adult 16; mature adult 18; old 20; very old 22; ancient 23; wyrm 25; great wyrm 26
**Treasure:** Triple standard
**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil or chaotic neutral
**Advancement Range:** Wyrmling 10-11 HD (Medium-size); very young 13-14 HD (Large); young 16-17 HD (Large); juvenile 19-20 HD (Large); young adult 22-23 HD (Huge); adult 25-26 HD (Huge); mature adult 28-29 HD (Huge); old 31-32 HD (Gargantuan); very old 34-35 HD (Gargantuan); ancient 37-38 HD (Gargantuan); wyrm 40-41 HD (Colossal); great wyrm 43+ HD (Colossal)

Native to the windswept plane of Pandemonium, howling dragons are brilliant, scheming, and quite insane. A howling dragon is long and slender, with short, thin legs and narrow wings. Long spines form a frill behind its head, and twin clusters of similar spines sprout from its shoulders. Its scales are mottled yellow and black, darkening as the dragon ages. Its yellow eyes are large and feral looking, with tiny pupils.

Howling dragons make their lairs in isolated caverns amid the twisting tunnels of their native plane. When they find their way to the Material Plane, they seek out similar terrain, and are thus

### FOR YOUR CHARACTER

Fiendish dragons are too evil and too powerful to serve most player characters as mounts, cohorts, or summoned creatures, but they serve well as a part of a character's history.

- Ask your DM if you can play a half-fiendish-dragon character.
- Many sorcerers claim to gain their powers from dragon blood in their veins. Perhaps your sorcerer has a fiendish dragon as an ancestor. Given the great ages dragons can live to, your progenitor might still be alive.
- If you play a tiefling character, your fiendish ancestor might have been a fiendish dragon. This option can be combined with the previous two if you wish a closer relationship to a fiendish dragon.

## HOWLING DRAGONS BY AGE

| Age | Size | HD (hp) | AC | Attack Bonus | Fort. Save | Ref. Save | Will Save | Breath Weapon (DC) | Fear DC | SR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wyrmling | M | 9d12+18 (76 hp) | 18 (+8 natural) | +12 | +8 | +6 | +5 | 2d10 (16) | 16 | 15 |
| Very Young | L | 12d12+36 (114 hp) | 20 (-1 size, +11 natural) | +16 | +11 | +8 | +7 | 4d10 (19) | 18 | 18 |
| Young | L | 15d12+45 (142 hp) | 23 (-1 size, +14 natural) | +21 | +12 | +9 | +9 | 6d10 (20) | 20 | 20 |
| Juvenile | L | 18d12+72 (189 hp) | 26 (-1 size, +17 natural) | +26 | +15 | +11 | +12 | 8d10 (23) | 23 | 22 |
| Young Adult | H | 21d12+105 (241 hp) | 28 (-2 size, +20 natural) | +29 | +17 | +12 | +13 | 10d10 (25) | 24 | 24 |
| Adult | H | 24d12+120 (276 hp) | 31 (-2 size, +23 natural) | +33 | +19 | +14 | +16 | 12d10 (27) | 27 | 26 |
| Mature Adult | H | 27d12+162 (337 hp) | 34 (-2 size, +26 natural) | +37 | +21 | +15 | +17 | 14d10 (29) | 28 | 28 |
| Old | G | 30d12+210 (405 hp) | 35 (-4 size, +29 natural) | +40 | +24 | +17 | +20 | 16d10 (32) | 31 | 30 |
| Very Old | G | 33d12+264 (478 hp) | 38 (-4 size, +32 natural) | +44 | +26 | +18 | +22 | 18d10 (34) | 33 | 32 |
| Ancient | G | 36d12+324 (558 hp) | 41 (-4 size, +35 natural) | +48 | +29 | +20 | +25 | 20d10 (37) | 36 | 33 |
| Wyrm | C | 39d12+390 (643 hp) | 40 (-8 size, +38 natural) | +48 | +31 | +21 | +27 | 22d10 (39) | 38 | 35 |
| Great Wyrm | C | 42d12+462 (735 hp) | 43 (-8 size, +41 natural) | +52 | +34 | +23 | +30 | 24d10 (42) | 41 | 36 |

| Age | Speed | Str | Dex | Con | Int | Wis | Cha | Special Abilities |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wyrmling | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor) | 17 | 10 | 15 | 14 | 9 | 14 | Sonic immunity |
| Very Young | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor) | 21 | 10 | 17 | 14 | 9 | 14 | *Shatter, sound burst* |
| Young | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor) | 25 | 10 | 17 | 16 | 11 | 16 | Damage reduction 5/+1 |
| Juvenile | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor) | 29 | 10 | 19 | 18 | 13 | 18 | *Gust of wind, Tasha's hideous laughter* |
| Young Adult | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor) | 31 | 10 | 21 | 18 | 13 | 18 | Damage reduction 10/+1 |
| Adult | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor) | 33 | 10 | 21 | 20 | 15 | 20 | *Confusion, wind wall* |
| Mature Adult | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor) | 35 | 10 | 23 | 20 | 15 | 20 | Damage reduction 20/+2 |
| Old | 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy) | 39 | 10 | 25 | 22 | 17 | 22 | *Phantasmal killer, shout* |
| Very Old | 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy) | 41 | 10 | 27 | 24 | 19 | 24 | Damage reduction 30/+3 |
| Ancient | 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy) | 43 | 10 | 29 | 26 | 21 | 26 | *Insanity, whirlwind* |
| Wyrm | 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy) | 45 | 10 | 31 | 28 | 23 | 28 | Damage reduction 40/+4 |
| Great Wyrm | 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy) | 47 | 10 | 33 | 30 | 25 | 30 | *Symbol* (insanity only), *weird* |

usually encountered far underground. They roam widely in the territory surrounding their lair, exploring every narrow crevice and tunnel.

Howling dragons feed on any creatures they can catch—living, undead, or even constructs—but they enjoy the sensation of biting into a still-moving morsel.

## Combat

Howling dragons attack with primal ferocity, battering their foes with every power at their disposal. They breathe as often as possible, switching between breath forms apparently at random.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** A howling dragon has two types of breath weapon, a cone of howling sound that deals sonic damage or a cone of maddening wails. Creatures within the latter must succeed at a Fortitude save or take 1 point of temporary Wisdom damage per age category of the dragon. On the plane of Pandemonium, where screaming winds restrict sound and hearing, both effects are limited to a 10-foot cone.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** 3/day—*Tasha's hideous laughter, wind wall*; 1/day—*confusion, gust of wind, insanity, phantasmal killer, shatter, shout, sound burst, symbol, weird, whirlwind*.

## PYROCLASTIC DRAGON

## DRAGON (EXTRAPLANAR)

**Climate/Terrain:** Warm land (Gehenna)
**Organization:** Solitary (1 dragon, any age), clutch (1d4+1 wyrmlings, very young, young, juvenile, or young adults), family (pair of mature adults and 1d4+1 offspring)
**Challenge Rating:** Wyrmling 4; very young 5; young 7; juvenile 10; young adult 12; adult 14; mature adult 16; old 18; very old 19; ancient 21; wyrm 22; great wyrm 24
**Treasure:** Triple standard
**Alignment:** Always lawful evil or neutral evil
**Advancement Range:** Wyrmling 8-9 HD (Medium-size); very young 11-12 HD (Large); young 14-15 HD (Large); juvenile 17-18 HD (Large); young adult 20-21 HD (Huge); adult 23-24 HD (Huge); mature adult 26-27 HD (Huge); old 29-30 HD (Gargantuan); very old 32-33 HD (Gargantuan); ancient 35-36 HD (Gargantuan); wyrm 38-39 HD (Gargantuan); great wyrm 41+ HD (Colossal)

Pyroclastic dragons are creatures of elemental fury, embodying the forces of fire, earth, and rumbling thunder that move earth and shape continents. They are native to the Bleak Eternity of Gehenna, an infinite plane of volcanic earthbergs and infernal lava.

A pyroclastic dragon is solidly built and powerfully muscled, conveying a sense of immovability. Its scales resemble fractured obsidian and glowing magma, forming a mottled pattern of reds, oranges, blacks, and grays over its entire body. Its large wings seem almost to be made of ash, but despite their flimsy appearance, they are quite capable of bearing the dragon's great weight aloft.

Pyroclastic dragons enjoy swimming through magma, but they make their lairs in caves carved out of volcanic rock. When they venture to the Material Plane, they live only in volcanic regions.

These dragons enjoy the taste of meat, particularly yugoloth flesh, but can also subsist on a purely mineral diet.

## Combat

Pyroclastic dragons have all the subtlety of a volcanic eruption—they might simmer and hiss for a time, but when they finally erupt, their fury is unmatched.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** A pyroclastic dragon has two types of breath weapon, a cone of superheated ash accompanied by crushing waves of sonic force (dealing half fire damage and half sonic

## PYROCLASTIC DRAGONS BY AGE

| Age | Size | HD (hp) | AC | Attack Bonus | Fort. Save | Ref. Save | Will Save | Breath Weapon(DC) | Fear DC | SR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wyrmling | M | 7d12+14 (59 hp) | 16 (+6 natural) | +10 | +7 | +5 | +5 | 2d6 (15) | 13 | 14 |
| Very Young | L | 10d12+30 (95 hp) | 18 (-1 size, +9 natural) | +14 | +10 | +7 | +7 | 4d6 (18) | 15 | 15 |
| Young | L | 13d12+39 (123 hp) | 21 (-1 size, +12 natural) | +19 | +11 | +8 | +9 | 6d6 (19) | 17 | 17 |
| Juvenile | L | 16d12+64 (168 hp) | 24 (-1 size, +15 natural) | +24 | +14 | +10 | +11 | 8d6 (22) | 19 | 20 |
| Young Adult | H | 19d12+95 (218 hp) | 26 (-2 size, +18 natural) | +27 | +16 | +11 | +13 | 10d6 (24) | 21 | 22 |
| Adult | H | 22d12+110 (253 hp) | 29 (-2 size, +21 natural) | +31 | +18 | +13 | +15 | 12d6 (26) | 23 | 24 |
| Mature Adult | H | 25d12+150 (312 hp) | 32 (-2 size, +24 natural) | +34 | +20 | +14 | +17 | 14d6 (28) | 25 | 26 |
| Old | G | 28d12+196 (378 hp) | 33 (-4 size, +27 natural) | +36 | +23 | +16 | +19 | 16d6 (31) | 27 | 28 |
| Very Old | G | 31d12+248 (449 hp) | 36 (-4 size, +30 natural) | +40 | +25 | +17 | +21 | 18d6 (33) | 29 | 29 |
| Ancient | G | 34d12+306 (527 hp) | 39 (-4 size, +33 natural) | +44 | +28 | +19 | +23 | 20d6 (36) | 31 | 31 |
| Wyrm | G | 37d12+370 (610 hp) | 42 (-4 size, +36 natural) | +48 | +30 | +20 | +25 | 22d6 (38) | 33 | 32 |
| Great Wyrm | C | 40d12+400 (660 hp) | 41 (-8 size, +39 natural) | +49 | +32 | +22 | +27 | 24d6 (40) | 35 | 34 |

| Age | Speed | Str | Dex | Con | Int | Wis | Cha | Special Abilities |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wyrmling | 60 ft., fly 100 ft. (poor), climb 40 ft., burrow 45 ft. | 17 | 10 | 15 | 10 | 11 | 10 | Fire and sonic immunity |
| Very Young | 60 ft., fly 100 ft. (poor), climb 40 ft., burrow 45 ft. | 21 | 10 | 17 | 10 | 11 | 10 | *Pyrotechnics, sound burst* |
| Young | 60 ft., fly 100 ft. (poor), climb 40 ft., burrow 45 ft. | 25 | 10 | 17 | 12 | 13 | 12 | Damage reduction 5/+1 |
| Juvenile | 60 ft., fly 100 ft. (poor), climb 40 ft., burrow 45 ft. | 29 | 10 | 19 | 12 | 13 | 12 | *Produce flame, shatter* |
| Young Adult | 60 ft., fly 100 ft. (poor), climb 40 ft., burrow 45 ft. | 31 | 10 | 21 | 14 | 15 | 14 | Damage reduction 10/+1 |
| Adult | 60 ft., fly 100 ft. (poor), climb 40 ft., burrow 45 ft. | 33 | 10 | 21 | 14 | 15 | 14 | *Shout, wall of fire* |
| Mature Adult | 60 ft., fly 100 ft. (poor), climb 40 ft., burrow 45 ft. | 33 | 10 | 23 | 16 | 17 | 16 | Damage reduction 20/+2 |
| Old | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (clumsy), climb 40 ft., burrow 45 ft. | 35 | 10 | 25 | 16 | 17 | 16 | *Fire storm, wall of stone* |
| Very Old | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (clumsy), climb 40 ft., burrow 45 ft. | 37 | 10 | 27 | 18 | 19 | 18 | Damage reduction 30/+3 |
| Ancient | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (clumsy), climb 40 ft., burrow 45 ft. | 39 | 10 | 29 | 18 | 19 | 18 | *Incendiary cloud, power word (stun)* |
| Wyrm | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (clumsy), climb 40 ft., burrow 45 ft. | 41 | 10 | 31 | 20 | 21 | 20 | Damage reduction 40/+4 |
| Great Wyrm | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (clumsy), climb 40 ft., burrow 45 ft. | 45 | 10 | 31 | 20 | 21 | 20 | *Meteor swarm* |

damage) or a disintegrating line. Creatures within the line must succeed at a Fortitude save or crumble to ash. (Creatures that successfully save do not take any damage.)

**Spell-Like Abilities:** 3/day—*produce flame, sound burst;* 1/day—*fire storm, incendiary cloud, meteor swarm, power word, stun, pyrotechnics, shatter, shout, wall of fire, wall of stone.*

## RUST DRAGON

### DRAGON (EXTRAPLANAR)

**Climate/Terrain:** Any land and underground (Acheron)
**Organization:** Solitary (1 dragon, any age), clutch (1d4+1 wyrmlings, very young, young, juvenile, or young adults), family (pair of mature adults and 1d4+1 offspring)
**Challenge Rating:** Wyrmling 3; very young 4; young 6; juvenile 8; young adult 10; adult 13; mature adult 15; old 17; very old 18; ancient 20; wyrm 22; great wyrm 24
**Treasure:** Triple standard
**Alignment:** Always lawful evil or lawful neutral
**Advancement Range:** Wyrmling 7-8 HD (Small); very young 10-11 HD (Medium-size); young 13-14 HD (Medium-size); juvenile 16-17 HD (Large); young adult 19-20 HD (Large); adult 22-23 HD (Huge); mature adult 25-26 HD (Huge); old 28-29 HD (Huge); very old 31-32 HD (Huge); ancient 34-35 HD (Gargantuan); wyrm 37-38 HD (Gargantuan); great wyrm 40+ HD (Gargantuan)

Native to the Infernal Battlefield of Acheron, rust dragons are creatures of tarnished metal, embodying forces of decay and corruption. Mad Material-Plane sages posit some connection between these fiendish monstrosities and the relatively innocuous rust monster, but the rational mind correctly sees these claims as the ravings of deranged lunatics.

Rust dragons bear a strong resemblance to the metallic dragons of the Material Plane, but they appear covered in rust, tarnish, or verdigris. Though some rust dragons resemble copper dragons and others silver or brass, there are no differences in the abilities of these rust dragons. Their scales appear pitted and lined with corrosive color, and the membranes of their wings are thin and iridescent.

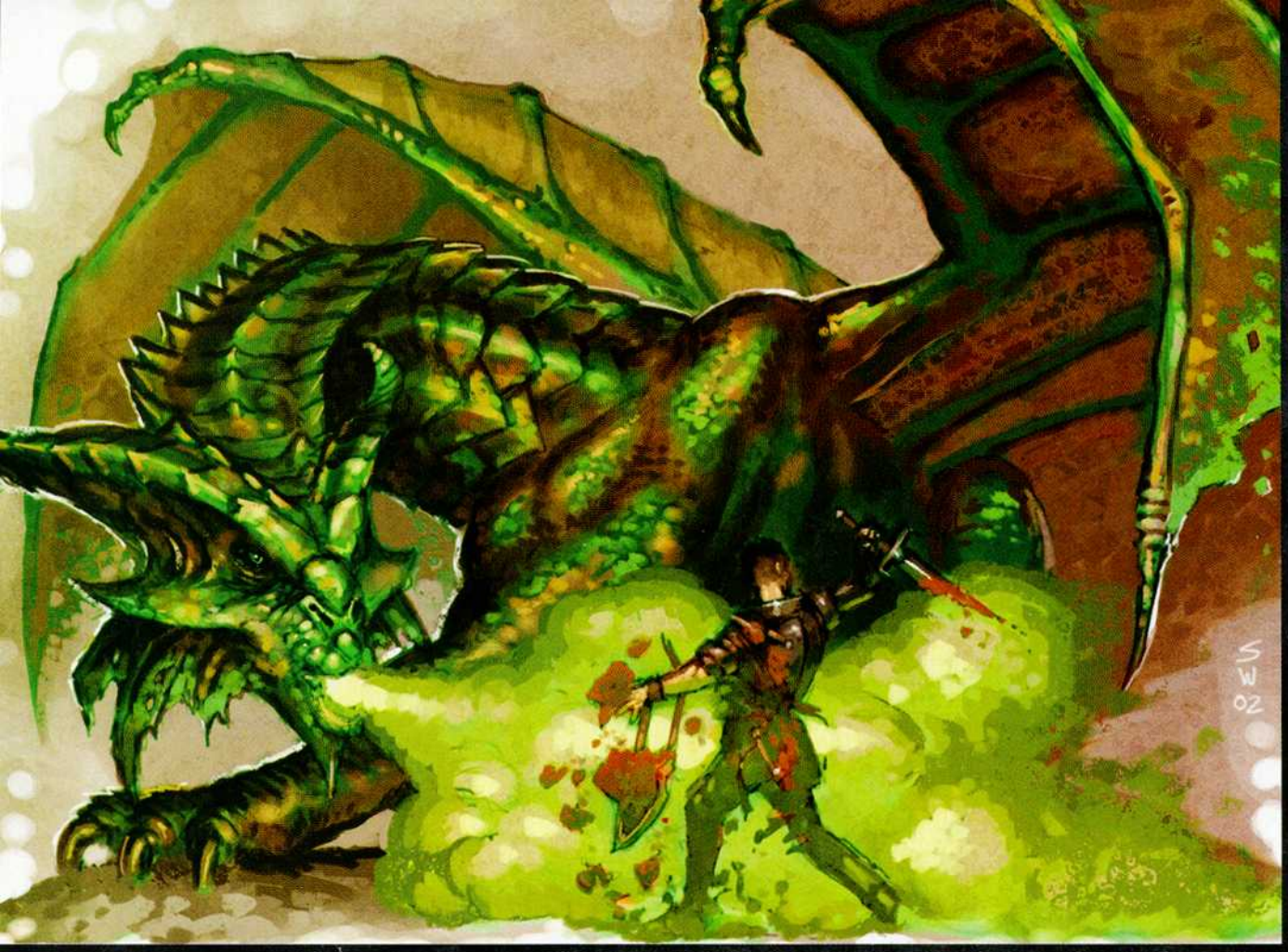
On their native plane of Acheron, rust dragons feed on endless iron cubes the size of continents floating in the void. When drawn to the Material Plane, rust dragons seek out veins of metal in underground caverns, making them particularly loathed by miners.

Rust dragons feed on corroded metal, but they enjoy fresh meat (particularly formians and vermin) to cleanse the palate between ores.

### Combat

Rust dragons are not the furious forces of nature that pyroclastic dragons are, nor are they violently insane like howling dragons. Rather, they are simply hungry, and they attack carefully with their goal clearly fixed in mind. They do not tolerate much interference in pursuit of that goal, and they readily break off from combat if a meal proves to be more trouble than it's worth.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** A rust dragon has two breath weapons, a line of acid or a cone of reddish-brown liquid that instantly rusts and destroys any metal



## RUST DRAGONS BY AGE

| Age | Size | HD (hp) | AC | Attack Bonus | Fort. Save | Ref. Save | Will Save | Breath Weapon (DC) | Fear DC | SR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wyrmling | S | 6d12+6 (45 hp) | 17 (+1 size, +6 natural) | +8 | +6 | +5 | +5 | 2d4 (14) | – | 13 |
| Very Young | M | 9d12+18 (76 hp) | 19 (+9 natural) | +11 | +8 | +6 | +6 | 4d4 (16) | 12 | 14 |
| Young | M | 12d12+24 (102 hp) | 22 (+12 natural) | +15 | +10 | +8 | +8 | 6d4 (18) | 14 | 16 |
| Juvenile | L | 15d12+45 (142 hp) | 24 (-1 size, +15 natural) | +18 | +12 | +9 | +9 | 8d4 (20) | 16 | 18 |
| Young Adult | L | 18d12+72 (189 hp) | 27 (-1 size, +18 natural) | +23 | +15 | +11 | +11 | 10d4 (23) | 18 | 20 |
| Adult | H | 21d12+105 (241 hp) | 29 (-2 size, +21 natural) | +27 | +17 | +12 | +12 | 12d4 (25) | 20 | 23 |
| Mature Adult | H | 24d12+120 (276 hp) | 32 (-2 size, +24 natural) | +31 | +19 | +14 | +15 | 14d4 (27) | 23 | 25 |
| Old | H | 27d12+162 (337 hp) | 35 (-2 size, +27 natural) | +35 | +21 | +15 | +16 | 16d4 (29) | 24 | 27 |
| Very Old | H | 30d12+180 (375 hp) | 38 (-2 size, +30 natural) | +39 | +23 | +17 | +19 | 18d4 (31) | 27 | 28 |
| Ancient | G | 33d12+231 (445 hp) | 39 (-4 size, +33 natural) | +41 | +25 | +18 | +20 | 20d4 (33) | 28 | 30 |
| Wyrm | G | 36d12+288 (522 hp) | 42 (-4 size, +36 natural) | +45 | +28 | +20 | +22 | 22d4 (36) | 30 | 32 |
| Great Wyrm | G | 39d12+312 (565 hp) | 45 (-4 size, +39 natural) | +49 | +29 | +21 | +25 | 24d4 (37) | 33 | 34 |

| Age | Speed | Str | Dex | Con | Int | Wis | Cha | Special Abilities |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wyrmling | 60 ft., fly 100 ft. (average), burrow 45 ft. | 13 | 10 | 13 | 6 | 11 | 6 | Acid Immunity, metal resistance, rusting bite |
| Very Young | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), burrow 45 ft. | 15 | 10 | 15 | 6 | 11 | 6 | |
| Young | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), burrow 45 ft. | 17 | 10 | 15 | 6 | 11 | 6 | Damage reduction 5/+1 |
| Juvenile | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), burrow 45 ft. | 19 | 10 | 17 | 8 | 11 | 8 | |
| Young Adult | 60ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), burrow 45 ft. | 23 | 10 | 19 | 8 | 11 | 8 | Damage reduction 10/+1 |
| Adult | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), burrow 45 ft. | 27 | 10 | 21 | 10 | 11 | 10 | *Wall of iron* |
| Mature Adult | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), burrow 45 ft. | 29 | 10 | 21 | 12 | 13 | 12 | Damage reduction 20/+2 |
| Old | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), burrow 45 ft. | 31 | 10 | 23 | 12 | 13 | 12 | *Acid fog* |
| Very Old | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), burrow 45 ft. | 33 | 10 | 23 | 14 | 15 | 14 | Damage reduction 30/+3 |
| Ancient | 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy), burrow 45 ft. | 35 | 10 | 25 | 14 | 15 | 14 | *Repel metal or stone* |
| Wyrm | 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy), burrow 45 ft. | 37 | 10 | 27 | 14 | 15 | 14 | Damage reduction 40/+4, rusting scales |
| Great Wyrm | 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy), burrow 45 ft. | 39 | 10 | 27 | 18 | 19 | 18 | |

it touches. Attended and magical metals receive Reflex saves to avoid this effect, but any metal is susceptible: copper, iron, steel, silver, gold, platinum, mithral, and adamantine.

**Metal Resistance (Ex):** A rust dragon is resistant to attacks from metal weapons. Against a weapon that has a primary striking surface of metal (a blade, metal point, arrowhead, or even mace head), a rust dragon has damage reduction equal to what a rust dragon two age categories older than itself has. Wyrm and great wyrm rust dragons have DR 50/+5 against metal weapons, and lesser weapons rust when used against them (see rusting scales).

**Rusting Bite (Ex):** A rust dragon that makes a successful bite attack causes metal armor worn by the target creature to corrode, falling to pieces and becoming useless immediately. A rust dragon can also use its bite attack to target a weapon or other metal object. The size of the object is immaterial—a full suit of armor rusts away as quickly as a sword. Magic metal items are allowed Reflex saves against a DC equal to the dragon's breath weapon save DC.

**Rusting Scales (Ex):** A metal weapon with less than a +5 enhancement bonus that hits a wyrm or great wyrm rust dragon corrodes immediately, with no saving throw allowed. A +5 (or greater) weapon deals damage normally, but then must succeed at a Reflex save against a DC equal to the dragon's breath weapon save DC or rust away.

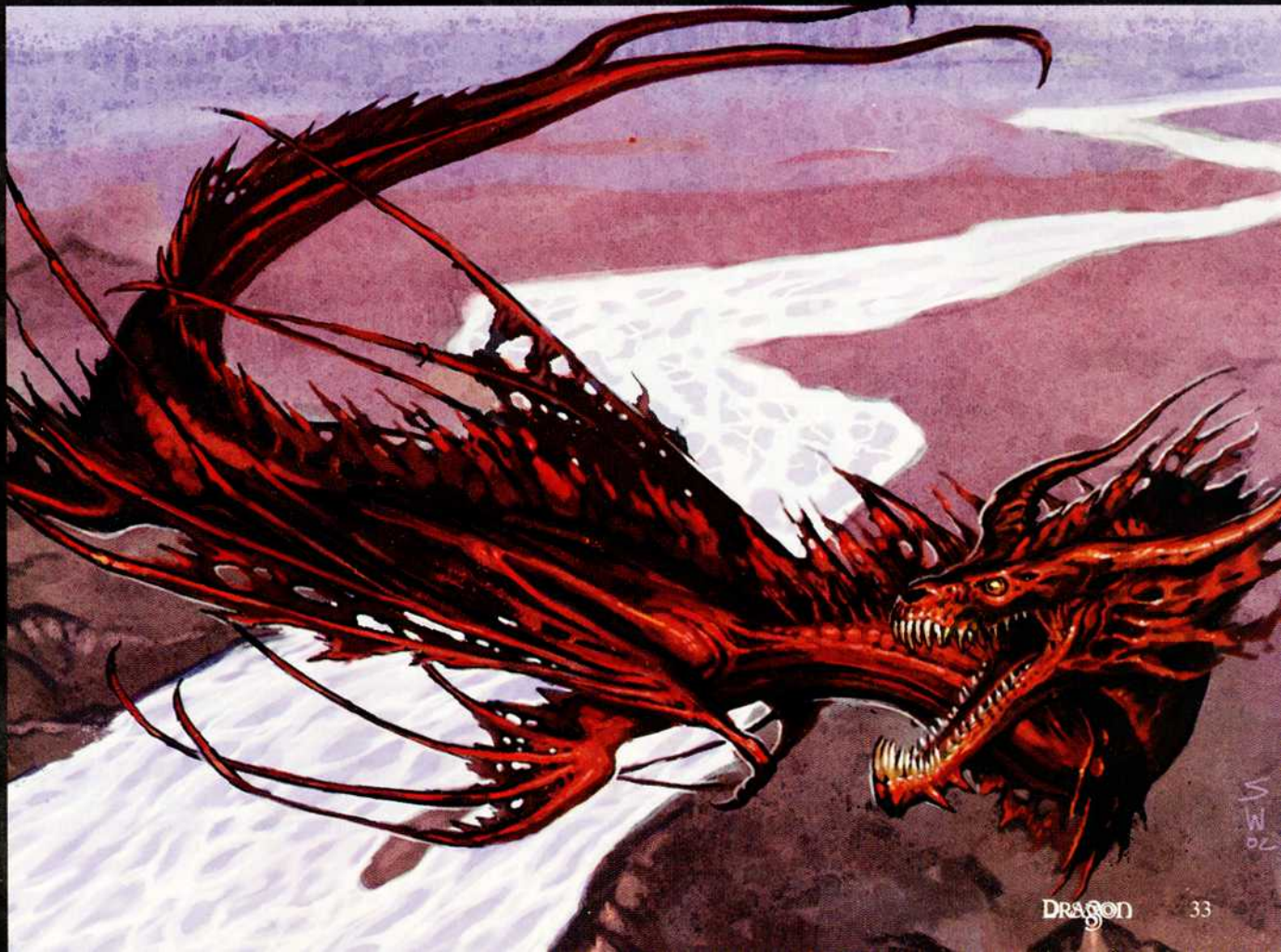
**Spell-Like Abilities:** 3/day—*wall of iron;* 1/day—*acid fog, repel metal or stone.*

## STYX DRAGON
## DRAGON (EXTRAPLANAR)

**Climate/Terrain:** Any aquatic (lower planes)
**Organization:** Solitary (1 dragon, any age), clutch (1d4+1 wyrmlings, very young, young, juvenile, or young adults), family (pair of mature adults and 1d4+1 offspring)
**Challenge Rating:** Wyrmling 3; very young 4; young 5; juvenile 8; young adult 10; adult 12; mature adult 15; old 17; very old 18; ancient 20; wyrm 21; great wyrm 23
**Treasure:** Triple standard
**Alignment:** Always neutral evil
**Advancement Range:** Wyrmling 6-7 HD (Tiny); very young 9-10 HD (Small); young 12-13 HD (Medium-size); juvenile 15-16 HD (Medium-size); young adult 18-19 HD (Large); adult 21-22 HD (Large); mature adult 24-25 HD (Huge); old 27-28 HD (Huge); very old 30-31 HD (Huge); ancient 33-34 HD (Huge); wyrm 36-37 HD (Gargantuan); great wyrm 39+ HD (Gargantuan)

Also known as shadowdrakes or darkwyrms, Styx dragons haunt the putrid waters of the River Styx throughout its nearly infinite length. Among the few creatures immune to the harmful effects of the river, Styx dragons swim with impunity across the top layers of all the Lower Planes, feasting on fiends and any other creatures they can find and catch.

A Styx dragon has a long, serpentine body with tiny flipper-like claws that are useless on land and in combat. Its wings are too small to carry it aloft, but they help to propel the dragon through the water. Its very long tail splits into two long, bladed whips that it can use to slash and grab its prey. A Styx dragon's scales are slimy and range from dark



## STYX DRAGONS BY AGE

| Age | Size | HD (hp) | AC | Attack Bonus | Fort. Save | Ref. Save | Will Save | Breath Weapon (DC) | Fear DC | SR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wyrmling | S | 5d12+5 (37 hp) | 15 (+1 size, +4 natural) | +7 | +5 | +4 | +4 | 1d6 (13) | – | 13 |
| Very Young | M | 8d12+16 (68 hp) | 17 (+7 natural) | +10 | +8 | +6 | +7 | 2d6 (16) | 15 | 14 |
| Young | M | 11d12+22 (93 hp) | 20 (+10 natural) | +14 | +9 | +7 | +8 | 3d6 (17) | 16 | 15 |
| Juvenile | L | 14d12+42 (133 hp) | 22 (-1 size, +13 natural) | +17 | +12 | +9 | +11 | 4d6 (20) | 19 | 18 |
| Young Adult | L | 17d12+68 (178 hp) | 25 (-1 size, +16 natural) | +22 | +14 | +10 | +12 | 5d6 (22) | 20 | 20 |
| Adult | H | 20d12+100 (230 hp) | 27 (-2 size, +19 natural) | +26 | +17 | +12 | +15 | 6d6 (25) | 23 | 22 |
| Mature Adult | H | 23d12+115 (264 hp) | 30 (-2 size, +22 natural) | +30 | +18 | +13 | +17 | 7d6 (26) | 25 | 25 |
| Old | H | 26d12+156 (325 hp) | 33 (-2 size, +25 natural) | +34 | +21 | +15 | +20 | 8d6 (29) | 28 | 27 |
| Very Old | H | 29d12+174 (362 hp) | 36 (-2 size, +28 natural) | +38 | +22 | +16 | +22 | 9d6 (30) | 30 | 28 |
| Ancient | G | 32d12+224 (432 hp) | 37 (-4 size, +31 natural) | +40 | +25 | +18 | +25 | 10d6 (33) | 33 | 30 |
| Wyrm | G | 35d12+280 (507 hp) | 40 (-4 size, +34 natural) | +44 | +27 | +19 | +26 | 11d6 (35) | 34 | 31 |
| Great Wyrm | G | 38d12+304 (551 hp) | 43 (-4 size, +37 natural) | +48 | +29 | +21 | +29 | 12d6 (37) | 37 | 33 |

| Age | Speed | Str | Dex | Con | Int | Wis | Cha | Special Abilities |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wyrmling | 60 ft., burrow 20 ft., swim 60 ft. | 13 | 10 | 13 | 10 | 11 | 10 | Acid immunity, immune to poison and disease, constrict, disease, improved grab, Styx adaptation |
| Very Young | 60 ft. , burrow 20 ft., swim 60 ft. | 15 | 10 | 15 | 12 | 13 | 12 | |
| Young | 60 ft. , burrow 20 ft., swim 60 ft. | 17 | 10 | 15 | 12 | 13 | 12 | Damage reduction 5/+1 |
| Juvenile | 60 ft. , burrow 20 ft., swim 60 ft. | 19 | 10 | 17 | 14 | 15 | 14 | *Curse water, fog cloud* |
| Young Adult | 60 ft., burrow 20 ft., swim 60 ft. | 23 | 10 | 19 | 14 | 15 | 14 | Damage reduction 10/+1 |
| Adult | 60 ft., burrow 20 ft., swim 60 ft. | 27 | 10 | 21 | 16 | 17 | 16 | *Deeper darkness, stinking cloud* |
| Mature Adult | 60 ft., burrow 20 ft., swim 60 ft. | 29 | 10 | 21 | 18 | 19 | 18 | Damage reduction 20/+2 |
| Old | 60 ft., burrow 20 ft., swim 60 ft. | 31 | 10 | 23 | 20 | 21 | 20 | *Hold monster, mind fog* |
| Very Old | 60 ft., burrow 20 ft., swim 60 ft. | 33 | 10 | 23 | 22 | 23 | 22 | Damage reduction 30/+3 |
| Ancient | 60 ft., burrow 20 ft., swim 60 ft. | 35 | 10 | 25 | 24 | 25 | 24 | *Control water, feeblemind* |
| Wyrm | 60 ft., burrow 20 ft., swim 60 ft. | 37 | 10 | 27 | 24 | 25 | 24 | Damage reduction 40/+4 |
| Great Wyrm | 60 ft., burrow 20 ft., swim 60 ft. | 39 | 10 | 27 | 26 | 27 | 26 | *Summon monster VIII, horrid wilting* |

brown to rusty red in color. Their eyes glow with a lurid yellow light.

Styx dragons make their lairs by burrowing into the mud on the banks of the Styx. They do not like to leave their native planes, but if forcibly brought to the Material Plane, they thrive in fetid water.

Styx dragons normally subsist on the flesh of fiends but enjoy eating any meat—particularly rotting carrion.

### Combat

A Styx dragon's physical attacks are limited: It attacks with the twin blades of its tail instead of claws, cannot use its wings effectively, and does not gain tail slap attacks in addition to its tail blades. However, its tail blades deal claw damage as if the dragon were one size category larger than its actual size, as does its tail sweep.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** A Styx dragon has two types of breath weapon, a line of acid that continues to do damage for 3 rounds (dealing half damage on the second round and one-quarter damage on the third round) or a cone of stupefying gas. Creatures within the latter must succeed at a Fortitude save or take 1 point of Intelligence damage per age category of the dragon.

**Constrict (Ex):** With a successful grapple check, a Styx dragon can crush a grabbed opponent, dealing twice its tail blade damage as bludgeoning damage.

**Disease (Ex):** Any creature hit by a Styx dragon's bite or tail attack must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC equal to that of the dragon's breath weapon) or contract stygian wasting. The symptoms of the disease include flesh rotting away and hair falling out. The incubation period is 1 day, and the disease deals 1d6 points of Charisma damage. The victim must make three successful Fortitude saves in a row to recover from stygian wastin (see Disease, in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

**Improved Grab (Ex):** If a Styx dragon hits an opponent that is at least one size category smaller than itself with a tail blade attack, it deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it gets a hold, it also constricts on the same round. Thereafter, the Styx dragon has the option to conduct the grapple normally or simply use its tail to hold the opponent (-20 penalty on grapple check, but the dragon is not considered grappled).

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At will—*curse water;* 3/day—*control water, deeper darkness, fog cloud;* 1/day—*feeblemind, hold monster, horrid wilting, mind fog, stinking cloud.*

**Styx Adaptation (Ex):** Styx dragons are immune to the harmful effects of the River Styx and can breathe water.

***Summon Monster VIII (Sp):*** Once per day, a great wyrm Styx dragon can summon a fiendish giant squid, 1d3 fiendish giant octopi or Large tojanidas, or 1d4+1 Large water elementals, Huge fiendish sharks, or fiendish giant crocodiles. Aside from the monsters available, this ability is identical to a *summon monster VIII* cast by a 15th-level sorcerer.

## TARTERIAN DRAGONS BY AGE

| Age | Size | HD (hp) | AC | Attack Bonus | Fort. Sav | Ref. Save | Will Save | Breath Weapon (DC) | Fear DC | SR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wyrmling | M | 8d12+16 (68 hp) | 17 (+7 natural) | +11 | +8 | +6 | +8 | 2d8 (16) | 16 | 15 |
| Very Young | L | 11d12+33 (104 hp) | 19 (-1 size, +10 natural) | +15 | +10 | +7 | +9 | 4d8 (18) | 17 | 17 |
| Young | L | 14d12+42 (133 hp) | 22 (-1 size, +13 natural) | +20 | +12 | +9 | +12 | 6d8 (20) | 20 | 19 |
| Juvenile | L | 17d12+68 (178 hp) | 25 (-1 size, +16 natural) | +25 | +14 | +10 | +14 | 8d8 (22) | 22 | 21 |
| Young Adult | H | 20d12+100 (230 hp) | 27 (-2 size, +19 natural) | +28 | +17 | +12 | +16 | 10d8 (25) | 24 | 23 |
| Adult | H | 23d12+115 (264 hp) | 30 (-2 size, +22 natural) | +32 | +18 | +13 | +18 | 12d8 (26) | 22 | 25 |
| Mature Adult | H | 26d12+156 (325 hp) | 33 (-2 size, +25 natural) | +36 | +21 | +15 | +20 | 14d8 (29) | 28 | 27 |
| Old | G | 29d12+203 (391 hp) | 34 (-4 size, +28 natural) | +39 | +23 | +16 | +22 | 16d8 (31) | 30 | 29 |
| Very Old | G | 32d12+256 (464 hp) | 37 (-4 size, +31 natural) | +43 | +26 | +18 | +24 | 18d8 (34) | 32 | 30 |
| Ancient | G | 35d12+315 (542 hp) | 40 (-4 size, +34 natural) | +47 | +28 | +19 | +26 | 20d8 (36) | 34 | 32 |
| Wyrm | C | 38d12+380 (627 hp) | 39 (-8 size, +37 natural) | +47 | +31 | +21 | +29 | 22d8 (39) | 37 | 33 |
| Great Wyrm | C | 41d12+451 (717 hp) | 42 (-8 size, +40 natural) | +51 | +33 | +22 | +30 | 24d8 (41) | 38 | 35 |

| Age | Speed | Str | Dex | Con | Int | Wis | Cha | Special Abilities |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wyrmling | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor) | 17 | 10 | 15 | 14 | 15 | 14 | Force resistance, strength of will, *freedom of movement* |
| Very Young | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor) | 21 | 10 | 17 | 14 | 15 | 14 | |
| Young | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor) | 25 | 10 | 17 | 16 | 17 | 16 | Damage reduction 5/+1 |
| Juvenile | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor) | 29 | 10 | 19 | 18 | 19 | 18 | |
| Young Adult | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor) | 31 | 10 | 21 | 18 | 19 | 18 | Damage reduction 10/+1 |
| Adult | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor) | 33 | 10 | 21 | 20 | 21 | 20 | *Otiluke's resilient sphere* |
| Mature Adult | 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor) | 35 | 10 | 23 | 20 | 21 | 20 | Damage reduction 20/+2 |
| Old | 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy) | 39 | 10 | 25 | 22 | 23 | 22 | *Maze* |
| Very Old | 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy) | 41 | 10 | 27 | 22 | 23 | 22 | Damage reduction 30/+3 |
| Ancient | 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy) | 43 | 10 | 29 | 24 | 25 | 24 | *Forcecage* |
| Wyrm | 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy) | 45 | 10 | 31 | 26 | 27 | 26 | Damage reduction 40/+4 |
| Great Wyrm | 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy) | 47 | 10 | 33 | 26 | 27 | 26 | *Imprisonment* |

## TARTERIAN DRAGON
## DRAGON (EXTRAPLANAR)

**Climate/Terrain:** Any land and underground (Carceri)
**Organization:** Solitary (1 dragon, any age), clutch (1d4+1 wyrmlings, very young, young, juveniles, or young adults), family (pair of mature adults and 1d4+1 offspring)
**Challenge Rating:** Wyrmling 5; very young 7; young 9; juvenile 11; young adult 13; adult 15; mature adult 17; old 19; very old 20; ancient 22; wyrm 23; great wyrm 25
**Treasure:** Triple standard
**Alignment:** Always neutral evil or chaotic evil
**Advancement Range:** Wyrmling 9-10 HD (Medium-size); very young 12-13 HD (Large); young 15-16 HD (Large); juvenile 18-19 HD (Large); young adult 21-22 HD (Huge); adult 24-25 HD (Huge); mature adult 27-28 HD (Huge); old 30-31 HD (Gargantuan); very old 33-34 HD (Gargantuan); ancient 36-37 HD (Gargantuan); wyrm 39-40 HD (Colossal); great wyrm 42+ HD (Colossal)

Native inhabitants of a prison plane, Tarterian dragons are at once wardens and prisoners, preying on weaker denizens than themselves.

Tarterian dragons are skeletally gaunt, with leathery scales stretched tight over withered-looking flesh. Their wings have a tattered appearance, though they can fly fast and ably. Their teeth and claws are long and black, while their scales form a striped pattern of black, gray, and olive green. Ghostly green light flickers in their black eyes, and their faces seem to wear a perpetual sneering grin.

Tarterian dragons inhabit a wide range of habitats on their native plane of Carceri, from the steaming jungles of Cathrys (the second layer) to the cruel mountains of Colothys (the fourth). Similarly, when they make their way to the Material Plane they can dwell comfortably in a variety of locales, both above and under the ground. They delight in reproducing the jailhouse atmosphere of Carceri wherever they find themselves on the Material Plane.

Tarterian dragons are accustomed to a diet of fiendish flesh and condemned souls. They do not enjoy other food but can subsist on literally anything.

## FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

Fiendish dragons are a great addition to any campaign as they can be used in all the same ways as fiends and dragons. For greater utility, consider using the half-dragon template to create half-fiendish-dragons. Apply the half-dragon template from the *Monster Manual* to whatever creature you wish with the following changes

*Special Attacks:* Half-fiendish-dragons have different breath weapons based on the variety of dragon. As with normal half-dragons, the base creature retains all its special attacks and gains a breath weapon usable once per day. A cone is always a 30 feet long, and a line is always 5 feet high, 5 feet wide, and 60 feet long.

| Dragon Variety | Breath Weapon | Damage (DC) |
|---|---|---|
| Holwing | Cone of sonic | 4d10 (19) |
| Pyroclastic | Cone of half sonic half fire | 2d6 (15) |
| Rust | Cone of rusting liquid | metal destroyed (14) |
| Styx | Line of acid | 2d6* (16) |
| Tartarian | Line of force | 6d8 (20) |

*Note that the half-styx-dragon's breath weapon does not continue to deal damage on successive rounds.

*Special Qualities:* Half-fiendish-dragons have different immunities based on the variety of dragon. As with normal half-dragons, the base creature retains all its special qualities and gains low-light vision, darkvision with a range of 60 feet, and immunity to sleep and paralysis.

| Dragon Variety | Immunity |
|---|---|
| Holwing | Sonic |
| Pyroclastic | Sonic and Fire |
| Rust | Acid |
| Styx | Acid and immunity to poison and disease |
| Tartarian | – |

*Advancement:* You might consider assigning the various half-dragons a different advancement when the base creature advances in a favored class. The favored classes of the fiendish dragons might look somthing like this:

| Dragon Variety | Favored Class |
|---|---|
| Holwing | Barbarian |
| Pyroclastic | Fighter |
| Rust | Monk |
| Styx | Wizard |
| Tartarian | Rogue |

## Combat

Tarterian dragons use their spell-like abilities to divide and constrain their opponents, trying to face each one individually when possible. They use their gas breath weapon to weaken foes at the start of combat, then their force breath to take out the strongest foes.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** A Tarterian dragon has two types of breath weapon, a line of disruptive force or a cone of will-sapping gas. Creatures within the latter must succeed at a Will save or be affected by a crushing despair, suffering a -2 morale penalty to saving throws, attack rolls, ability checks, skill checks, and weapon damage rolls for 1 round per age category of the dragon.

**Force Resistance (Ex):** Tarterian dragons gain a +4 racial bonus to their saving throws against force-based spells and effects.

**Freedom of Movement (Su):** Tarterian dragons can move and attack normally despite any magic that usually impedes movement, such as *hold monster, paralysis, solid fog, slow,* and *web* spells.

**Strength of Will (Ex):** Tarterian dragons gain a +4 morale bonus to their saving throws against charm and compulsion effects.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** 1/day—*forcecage, imprisonment, maze, Otiluke's resilient sphere.* D

# BY THE HANDS OF HAGS

by Wesley Schneider · illustrated by Arnie Swekel

Beneath a canopy of dying leaves, even midday is transformed into a sickly twilight. By fetid pools and within broken hovels, masters of sinister arts and servants of dark gods practice fell rituals. Lurking in the depths of untamed forests and the most vile, stinking swamps, these wicked magic-users arm themselves with formidable weapons forged by a union of loathsome rites and the dark magic of the wild.

Crafted from savage, primeval enchantments, these weapons of evil are wielded in a battle against order itself. This is a war of subtly, where hags, dark druids, and witch doctors tempt the unsuspecting into their webs of chaos and destruction. Like the vile practitioners, these magic items are twisted mockeries of the mundane, tempered in the fires of their creator's warped hatreds. Each is empowered to curse and confuse, to trick and tempt, and to aid their dark makers in their campaign against civilization.

Many of these items are tainted by their origins, and players might find themselves faced with a disturbing dilemma before choosing to slip on a pair of *maiden's hands* or saving themselves with a mysterious *tomb of weeds*. Many of these foul items are also particularly sadistic in their effects on their victims, and PCs claiming such items might find that they have become as loathsome as the item's evil creator.

## BONE RATTLE

*Bone rattles* exemplify hatred of youth and the lust to spread suffering, their creation demanding these passions. The intact skull of a young humanoid child impaled upon the femur of the same creature forms the rattle's head and handle. A half dozen small finger bones placed within the sealed hollow of the skull complete its loathsome design.

Triggered by intentional shaking (a standard action), a hollow, child-like laughter emanates from the rattle's skull, swiftly growing to a full scream of pain and terror. All creatures within 25 feet of the user must succeed at a Will saving throw (DC 13) or be bombarded with hideous mental images of pain and death. As the images play out, the victim falls prone and is forced into a bout of raucous laughter, unable to stop for 1d3 rounds or perform any other action during that time. After the mental attack ends, creatures of good alignment are so affected by the callous nature of their uncontrollable actions that they must make another Will save (DC 13), or be shaken for 10 minutes. The item's wielder is unaffected. Creatures with an Intelligence of 2 or less are unaffected. This is a mind-influencing, Enchantment (compulsion) effect; the secondary effect on creatures of good alignment is a fear effect.

**Caster Level:** 5th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *scare, Tasha's uncontrollable laughter;* **Market Price:** 25,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 12,500 gp + 1,000 XP; **Weight:** 1 lb.

## BLACK HOUR PILLAR

A *black hour pillar* is a 2-foot tall pillar of black wax etched with gruesome symbols and tormented images. For one hour after it is lit, the candle burns swiftly, chilling the air within 20 feet by 10 degrees and casting its foul purple glow in a 20-foot radius. While the candle is lit, the area illuminated by its evil glow is treated as being under the effects of an *unhallow* spell. Any who attempt to enter the area after the candle is lit must also make a Will save (DC 15) or flee as if under the effects of a *cause fear* spell cast by a 9th-level caster. The candle can be blown out or quenched by normal means, suspending its effects until it is lit again. The candle can burn for a total of 1 hour, but this time need not be consecutive.

**Caster Level:** 9th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *cause fear, unhallow;* **Market Price:** 2,250; **Cost to Create:** 1,125 gp + 90 XP; **Weight:** —.

## BRAMBLE MAN

A *bramble man* is a strange and powerful magic item that looks like little more than a 2-foot-tall bundle of roots and twigs, crudely shaped into humanoid form. When created, a *bramble man* is imbued with a spell. Only spells that target a creature can be placed in a *bramble man;* touch and ranged touch spells work, but spells that target and affect an area (such as *fireball*) do not. Spell effects that must be specified by the caster must be specified at the time of creation.

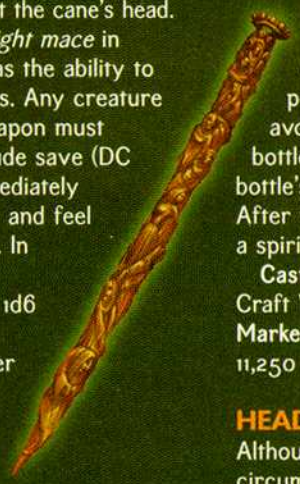
Once the command word is spoken, the next creature to touch the *bramble man* or be touched with the *bramble man* becomes the target of the spell, but the spell does not yet take effect. For example, a user could trigger it and leave it for another to touch, trigger it and touch someone with it, trigger it and throw it at a creature, or trigger it, release it, and pick it up to target himself. A magical link is formed between the target and the *bramble man,* and when the *bramble man* is broken or otherwise destroyed (hardness 0, hit points 3, break DC 5), the spell takes effect at its minimum caster level, and saving throws, spell resistance, and other effects are resolved normally. The link formed by the *bramble man* is not limited by distance, but it can be suppressed for 1d4 rounds by a successful dispel check on the target or the *bramble man,* is suppressed if either the target or the *bramble man* is in an *antimagic field,* and the link cannot cross the boundaries between planes. If the *bramble man* is broken while the link is suppressed or the target is on another plane, the spell is wasted. A *wish* or *miracle* spell can destroy the link, but this causes the *bramble man* to target the next creature that touches it.

**Caster Level:** 17th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *imbue with spell ability, bestow curse;* **Weight:** 2 lb.

| Spell Level | Market Price | Cost to Create |
|---|---|---|
| 1st | 125 gp | 62 gp + 5 XP |
| 2nd | 450 gp | 225 gp + 18 XP |
| 3rd | 1,575 gp | 787 gp + 63 XP |
| 4th | 4,200 gp | 2,100 gp + 168 XP |
| 5th | 6,750 gp | 3,375 gp + 270 XP |
| 6th | 9,900 gp | 4,950 gp + 396 XP |
| 7th | 13,650 gp | 6,850 gp + 546 XP |
| 8th | 18,000 gp | 9,000 gp + 720 XP |
| 9th | 22,950 gp | 11,475 gp + 918 XP |

## CRONE'S CANE

The *crone's cane* is a tool suitable to the sly trickery of the aged. A gnarled sliver of stout wood, the only features of the cane to distinguish it from a more mundane item are the transitional images carved along its length. These carvings detail the journey from birth to old age, showing a featureless figure grow from a crawling babe, to an upright adult, ending in a hunchbacked elder at the cane's head.



Wielded as a *+1 light mace* in combat, the cane has the ability to "age" those it strikes. Any creature damaged by the weapon must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 20) or seem to immediately grow decades older and feel the ravages of time. In actuality, the cane permanently drains 1d6 Strength and 1d6 Dexterity. To further the impression of age, the cane permanently transforms the victim as if he had been affected by the *alter self* spell, making him appear to be an elderly member of his own race, similar to how he might naturally look after years pass. Once affected by the cane, a creature cannot be affected again by it unless the *alter self* effect is dispelled. When the *crone's cane* is broken or destroyed, creatures drained of their Strength or Dexterity regain those drained points if they have not already done so by another means (such as *restoration* or *greater restoration*), and the *alter self* effect ends.

**Caster Level:** 11th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *alter self, bestow curse;* Market **Price:** 32,000; **Cost to Create:** 16,000 gp + 1,280 XP; **Weight:** 3 lb.

## DEAD MAN'S BOTTLE

A *dead man's bottle* seems to be little more then a dirt-encrusted antique wine bottle of smoky black or green glass. The stopper is always shaped as a stylized, elongated human skull.

When the bottle is filled with alcohol and then poured upon a grave, any corpse up to 10 feet below the surface is affected as if by a *speak with dead* spell. Only the bottle's user can hear and speak to the dead, but the deceased is more responsive than with the usual *speak with dead* spell, and the dead of other alignments suffer a -2 penalty to their Will saves to avoid answering. The effects of the bottle last for 5 minutes, and the bottle's user can ask two questions. After the first use, attempts to contact a spirit fail until one week passes.

**Caster Level:** 5th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *speak with dead;* **Market Price:** 22,500; **Cost to Create:** 11,250 gp + 900 XP; **Weight:** —.

## HEAD OF THE LOVELESS

Although unlikely, under unusual circumstances it is possible for a creature as hate-filled as a hag to find a semblance of what other mortals know as "love." The green hag Gorwyn was known for her talent as a

seductress, cloaking herself in illusions to prey upon deluded would-be lovers. She and her covey feasted often and well thanks to her deadly wiles. But it was a druid of the loathsome gods of the hunt that turned her fortunes. His powers and foul passions seemed just as strong as hers, and between them they formed a dark bond. Gorwyn would visit her lover often, neglecting her covey to be with him and enact their own sinister plans. Soon, her covey sisters noticed her straying from her hunts and followed her to the druid's lair. After spying upon their sister and her lover for an evening, they ambushed the pair while they were least aware. Gorwyn's sisters cackled as they berated her for her weakness, forcing her to watch as her lover was butchered under their jagged claws. As the torment of losing perhaps the one thing any hag ever loved wracked her, she began to scream, but with iron grips they silenced her. As she still lived, they sewed her mouth shut with her own hair, then decapitated her. Leaving the blood-soaked grove, Gorwyn's sisters took with them only her head, within which still echoed the never-heard scream of a hag's lost love. The first *head of the loveless* was the preserved head of this green hag, which served as a reminder to all hags of the penalty for love. Since that time, the ability to create such items has spread to all races, and so too has its sinister warning.

A creature bearing a *head of the loveless* receives a +5 luck bonus to saving throws against spells, spell-like abilities, effects of the Enchantment school, and mind-influencing effects. This includes the fear, mind-influencing, charm, or domination abilities of monsters; and compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects.

In addition, once per day the stitches of the head's mouth can stretch, allowing it to scream. The head's bearer must simply hold the *head of the loveless* aloft and say the word "love" in any language. This is a standard action. The *head of the loveless* then screams with the same effect as a *shout* spell cast by a 15th-level caster.

**Caster Level:** 15th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *resistance, shout;* Market **Price:** 74,450; **Cost to Create:** 37,225 gp + 2,978 XP; **Weight:** 9 lb.

## MAIDEN'S HANDS

At first glance the *maiden's hands* appear to be little more than a delicately embroidered pair of white silk gloves. However, closer inspection reveals that the fingertips of each glove are actually the mummified fingertips of a humanoid hand, the dead, inch-long nails still intact.

The *maiden's hands* are powerful tools for any would-be seductress or assassin. As soon as the user places both gloves upon his hands, he is transformed into a beautiful female as though by the *alter self* spell and as dictated by the type of fingertips attached to the gloves. Most *maiden's hands* have been crafted to change the wearer into a human female (50%), however, several have been known to transform their user into elven (30%), half-elven (10%), halfling (5%), or dwarven (5%) forms. The *maiden's hands* also undergo a change when their power is active, the mummified fingertips grow soft and life-like, and a pattern of roses, surrounded by sinister thorny vines, appear painted across each nail. The gloves do not function for creatures of an inappropriate size (such as a human wearing a pair of *maiden's hands* that would transform the wearer into a halfling female). The power of the *maiden's hands* lasts for as long as both gloves remain on the user's hands.

The greatest weakness of the *maiden's hands* is that they can only turn the wearer into one form. Each time the gloves are used, the wearer is changed into the same female form—that of the woman whose fingers were cut off to make the item.

**Caster Level:** 5th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *alter self;* Market **Price:** 1,200; **Cost to Create:** 600 gp + 48 XP; **Weight:** —.

## TOMB OF WEEDS

The *tomb of weeds* appears to be little more than a 3-foot by 7-foot woven mat of twisted roots and thorny vines. However, more than one cornered magic-user has seemingly returned from the grave thanks to these creations.

Any creature that falls prone on a *tomb of weeds* laid on earth or sand (not solid stone) immediately suffers 1d2 points of damage as dozens of tiny thorns pierce its body. A creature so damaged may utter the tomb's command word and be wrapped in a cocoon of spiked vines and instantly drug 10 feet underground. If a helpless creature is placed on the *tomb of weeds*, any creature within 5 feet may utter the command word to activate the item. Creatures so entombed enter a state of suspended animation similar to that created by the *temporal stasis* spell. The only exception to this effect is that while in stasis, the creature is infused with energy the tomb leeches from the surrounding land, allowing the creature to heal as though

undergoing complete bed rest for 2 days for each day of real time spent in the *tomb of weeds*. Thus, someone placed on a *tomb of weeds* who is at negative hit points will suffer damage but effectively stabilizes after being entombed. When a creature is healed of all hit point and ability damage, the tomb resurfaces. Otherwise, it resurfaces after 1 week in the same spot, or a nearby place if that area is blocked, allowing the user to awaken and exit. A creature can be freed prematurely from the tomb simply by digging it up. Each use of the *tomb of weeds* drains power from the item. Most tombs have 50 charges.

**Caster Level:** 7th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *entangle, regenerate, sleep;* Market **Price:** 25,200; **Cost to Create:** 12,600 gp + 1,008 XP; **Weight:** 3 lb.

## YACKTI FIGURE

The subtlety of the black ceramic *yackti figure* is the preferred method of revenge for many dark druids and arcane spellcasters. Only 2 inches long, *yackti figures* are poorly made humanoid figurines that have a plug allowing access to a small hollow within the figure's chest.

For a *yackti figure* to function, a drop of blood or a strand of hair of the intended victim must be placed within the figure. After that, the user has a series of possible torments she can inflict. If the figure is placed in a flame, the victim feels as though his muscles are on fire, and he suffers a -4 enhancement penalty to Strength. If it is placed within a bowl of water, the victim feels as though his lungs have become partially water logged, and he suffers a -4 enhancement penalty to Constitution. If the figure is buried in earth, the victim feels as though his movement has been constrained, suffering a -4 enhancement penalty to Dexterity. The penalties apply only so long as the *yakti figure* is kept in earth, fire, or water and the *yakti figure* and the target are on the same plane. Only one creature can be affected by any individual *yakti figure;* placing the hair or blood of more than one creature in a *yakti figure* causes it to have no effect on any creature.

A *remove curse* spell removes the penalty, but the same penalty or a different one can be applied by removing the *yakti figure* and placing it in earth, fire, or water again. The only sure way to be rid of the penalty is to remove the blood or hair from the *yakti figure* or destroy the *yakti figure.*

**Caster Level:** 17th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *bestow curse, locate creature, wish;* Market **Price:** 60,000; **Cost to Create:** 30,000 gp + 2,400 XP; **Weight:** —.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# How FAR should You Go?

## Choosing the Right Level of Evil for your Campaign

by Monte Cook · illustrated by Tony Moseley

At its most basic level, DUNGEONS & DRAGONS is a game of good versus evil. Usually (but not always), the PCs are the heroes who seek adventure and help right the wrongs of the world. Depending on the campaign or your game group, the level of evil will vary. Some campaigns, such as those that have a horror theme, feature darker, more evil elements and are generally more gruesome and violent. Deciding to allow certain acts of evil or "mature" themes, such as sexual content, is a decision that shouldn't be made lightly, and certainly, it is a decision that every member of the group should help make. The first question that must be answered is "how much is too much?" In other words, how far do you go? Do you keep things simple and avoid thinking too much about the actions of the evil people in the campaign, or do you provide vivid details of such things? Do you show vile behavior and gruesome violence onstage or off?

How you and the rest of your group answers these questions will shape your campaign. Once you make a choice as to the level of vile or "mature" content your campaign will have, you should attempt to remain fairly consistent. Springing something horrific and vile on the other players when they are used to a lighthearted game can be jarring and uncomfortable. Likewise, something lighthearted and silly can sometimes (although not always) ruin the atmosphere of a dark and serious game.

## Deciding How Far To Go

There are four important elements for a game group to consider when deciding exactly how far to go and what kind of campaign they feel most comfortable with.

1. **Talk to the other players.** First and foremost, the group should develop a consensus for how they want to deal with potentially objectionable material, violence, and adult themes. Listen to what the other players have to say, and respect their opinions. As a group, develop your boundaries. These boundaries can range from "anything goes" to "let's keep this at the Disney-movie level." Using the movie or television rating system is a good way to describe your boundaries, because it provides a common point of reference for almost everyone.

2. **Determine if anyone will be offended or adversely affected.** As a general rule, if there are children in your game group, unquestionably adult issues should be avoided. Also, keep in mind that many adults are uncomfortable with certain issues as well. For example, one player might be bothered by detailed descriptions of the violence and gore in the game. It's important for all the players in the group to know how one another feels before the campaign begins.

3. **Determine if you and the other players can handle the subject matter seriously and maturely.** The last thing a DM wants is to have subject matter that is meant to be dark and serious end up funny. Some players can't or won't deal with certain issues. If the DM introduces a villain with a twisted fetish as one of his character traits and the players make it into a joke, the DM might be wise to avoid similar subject matter in the future. In some cases, it's best to avoid the subject altogether.

4. **Make sure the game stays fun.** First and foremost, D&D is a game. It's supposed to be fun. If dealing with certain topics isn't fun for you or for any of the other players, don't do it. If, after discussing your boundaries, you find that yours differ from the rest of the group's, you might consider finding a new group or asking the players to start a second campaign, one in which you'd feel more comfortable.

## Choosing Your Campaign Type

In D&D and other roleplaying games, there are number of different styles of play. For instance, some groups play in very lighthearted campaigns, while others prefer dark, vile campaigns. Where does your style of gaming fall on this spectrum?

### The Lighthearted Game

LG

In a lighthearted game, not much thought is given to the difference between good and evil. Orcs and trolls are the "bad guys," and thus, they are the foes of the PCs, who are the "good guys."

These types of players don't spend much time, if at all, thinking about what makes the troll bad, other than the fact that it will eat them. The orcs aren't portrayed as doing much of anything, let alone evil acts—they're just bad. At most, evil creatures are boorish bullies. Characters in such a game don't have sex (and aren't motivated by it). Dead bodies seem to almost fade away after the battle is over and the loot is gathered.

Everyone walks away from the game table having had a good time, but no one worries about the implications of actions. Once the game is over, none of the players thinks much about the game again (except perhaps the DM) until the next session starts.

This sort of game is best for younger players, or a "beer and pretzels" game for players who don't care for in-depth roleplaying. These players are usually looking for an enjoyable diversion for an evening. This isn't "immature" gaming. That word suggests that this style of gaming is inferior, which it isn't. It is simply a different type of gaming than what others might prefer.

### The Standard Game

SG

In this type of game, there is a clear division between good and evil. You can use a spell to determine if something or someone is evil or good, and characters (both PCs and NPCs) make choices to determine whether they will take good or evil actions. Most of the PCs maintain non-evil alignments, and the exception to this is rare.

When it comes to the evil portrayed in this type of game, creatures and characters might waylay travelers and steal from them, kill innocent townsfolk, enslave others, or even make sacrifices to their evil gods. The reasons behind these evil actions are usually not explored. Scenes of graphic violence are usually avoided or left strictly to the battlefield.

Players think about the implications of their actions but normally don't have to worry too much, for most of the time they don't stray from their course—which is occupied primarily with fighting evil creatures (clearly defined as a good act).

Villains in this type of game might worship evil gods and even traffic with demons, but beyond providing interesting plot material for the players, these evil acts aren't usually explored in detail.

This sort of game is the most common, and it is the type that the core rulebooks assume.

### The Mature Game

MG

Some people, realizing that everyone in their game group is old enough to see an R-rated movie and also willing to handle subject matter of a more adult nature, choose to deal with topics the other group types usually gloss over. The NPCs in a mature game are evil beings whose malevolence delves deeper into depravity and corruption. Characters in these campaigns have sex and can be motivated (or betrayed) by relationships that have nothing to do with "an adventure."

In a game of this type, villains rape and torture, the DM occasionally provides more graphic depictions of gore, and the game relies on more detailed explorations of the worship of evil gods or fiends.

Evil beings are sadistic, exploitive, and pathological. Fiends, creatures that exist as the actual embodiment of evil, possess traits and commit acts that go beyond the standard definition of evil and become truly vile.

### The Vile Game

VG

A few players choose to revel in the darkness and play in a vile campaign. This campaign type is almost a horror game rather than just a fantasy game. Horrible darkness predominates, and the PCs either struggle against its overwhelming might or, in some cases, they are the ones with the evil alignments and take the role of villains.

Virtually no subject is taboo in a vile campaign. The PCs might very well face off against a necrophiliac, sadist consort

## SANITY AND VILE DARKNESS

The *Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying Game* provides an alternate and interesting approach to handling the level of mature content in a campaign. Presented in that book are rules for integrating a Sanity score into all PC and NPC stat blocks. This Sanity score is a rating of 1 to 100, measuring a character's stability and sanity. The more horrific and terrible things that a character encounters, the more she loses from her Sanity score. Characters who reach 0 Sanity become insane, but it is possible for characters to regain Sanity by accomplishing good deeds and seeing evil defeated.

Using a system such as this, PCs lose Sanity points when they encounter gruesome, unnatural, or evil situations. This game mechanic clearly separates good and evil, and it draws attention to the vile, plainly identifying it as something to avoid or fight.

More importantly, perhaps, this system allows players of a roleplaying game to include dark or adult themes while still holding them at arm's length. It also makes scenes of gruesome horror or unsettling perversion more a part of the "game" and less a simple aspect of the "story." For some, that's good. Other players will not find that as satisfying. If your game group is interested in adopting such a system for your game, check out Chapter 4: Sanity in the *Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying Game* and the section on using *Call of Cthulhu* material in a D&D game on page 285.

of a lich who uses sex as a reward for those who serve her needs. The malevolence of evil characters in such a game makes it difficult to distinguish them from demons or similar beings.

## GATHERING THE ELEMENTS TOGETHER

Thousands of elements go into shaping a campaign. Here are a few of the major areas to think about as you decide what style of game you want to play and how much vile or "mature" content you should include in the game.

### The Player Characters

Perhaps the primary defining factor in determining the flavor of a game is to examine the PCs involved.

**Lighthearted Game:** The PCs come from all classes and races found in the *Player's Handbook*. Very little thought is given to alignment. Clerics pick a patron deity but don't think much about the choice beyond what domains each deity provides.

**Standard Game:** The PCs are good- or neutral-aligned characters of all classes and races. The rare exception might be evil aligned, but this is often more due to heritage than choice.

**Mature Game:** Player characters in a mature game are sometimes evil, or—more likely—formerly evil or members of traditionally evil races, like drow.

**Vile Game:** Players might play evil or even fiendish characters. Alternatively, PCs might generally be good but have selfish or sinful impulses, reflecting the nature of the complicated world around them.

### Adventures

The adventures that the characters have define the mood of a game.

**Lighthearted Game:** Orcs are attacking a village and the PCs must go to the orc's lair and put an end to their plans.

**Standard Game:** Within the orc's lair, the PCs find a temple to Gruumsh and free a number of prisoners who were soon to be sacrificed to the evil deity.

**Mature Game:** Two of the female prisoners are pregnant after assaults made by the orcs and will give birth to half-orc children.

**Vile Game:** The orc priests of Gruumsh are saving all the blood of the hundreds and hundreds of sacrifices they have made to create a blood golem or call a fiend permanently into the world.

### NPCs

Can the PCs trust the people whom they talk to? What are people in the world like? Like the adventures aspect above, NPCs can set the mood of a game.

**Lighthearted Game:** The townsfolk are almost universally good, trustworthy people, and the creatures the PCs meet on an adventure are almost universally evil. Variance from this formula is rare.

**Standard Game:** NPCs run the gamut of good to evil, but the distinction between good and evil characters is clear (and if it's not, a *detect evil* spell quickly informs the PCs of a target's alignment). The plot of the villain usually involves nothing more than gaining power or wealth.

**Mature Game:** As in a standard game, the people have a variety of outlooks, and most of those living together in peaceful communities are good, law-abiding folks. However, a veneer of benevolence sometimes hides a distasteful underside.

Villains are motivated by base urges and perversion as well as greed and lust for power. Some warped individuals are capable of truly heinous acts, and sometimes the PCs are forced to discover just how deep their foes' depravity goes in their quest to defeat them.

**Vile Game:** Everyone has a dark or selfish side—even if it is just to survive in the harsh world of betrayal and lies. PCs learn to trust no one and suspect everyone. Trust and acceptance are rare commodities in this type of game.

### Slavery

This is a touchy issue in some people's minds. What do the PCs do if they see the ownership of other intelligent creatures around them?

**Lighthearted Game:** Slavers and slavery might be mentioned, but only in passing as an obvious evil. For example, "The goblins want to capture the townsfolk and sell them into slavery."

**Standard Game:** Slavers are villains, and slavery is condoned in only the most evil and corrupt societies. When the PCs encounter slavery, they are always in a position to bring it to an end (at least, eventually).

**Mature Game:** Slavery is a common aspect of the game—one of the many evils that some people in the campaign world choose to live with. PCs determine for themselves how they feel about the issue, but it might be so prevalent in the society around them that it is too big for them to overcome entirely.

**Vile Game:** The PCs might find it necessary to put their captured enemies to work to help build a fortification. They might even find that they can earn a little extra money by selling their prisoners when they are done.

### Torture

Fighting a foe in equal combat is one thing, inflicting pain on a helpless victim is quite another.

**Lighthearted Game:** The topic of torture should be avoided altogether. Even the villains don't torture their victims, and there are no torture chambers in the dungeons the PCs find.

**Standard Game:** In this type of game, it is common for the PCs to come across a dungeon room filled with a rack, some stocks, and branding irons. Torture is often threatened or implied, but it happens "offstage." The PCs wouldn't consider torturing their captives, nor would any good, law-abiding folk.

**Mature Game:** On occasion, the PCs might be tempted to resort to torture as a means to get what they need, but they usually fight—and resist—such impulses. A PC might watch helplessly as an NPC comrade is exposed to mild torture, such as beatings, branding, or getting stretched on the rack.

**Vile Game:** A PC captured by a foe might undergo gruesome and horrific torture: being forced to eat bits of his own flesh a little at a time, having needles poked in his eyes or genitals, being lit on fire and then doused with water repeatedly, and so on. The PCs might even use the same tactics. The world is a terrible place.

## Rape

The subject of rape is perhaps one of the most sensitive subjects to approach in a D&D game. This topic should be handled with extreme care, and when in doubt, avoided altogether.

**Lighthearted Game:** The topic of rape, or any type of sexual content, should be avoided completely.

**Standard Game:** References to actions that happened in the distant past (such as the origin of a half-orc character) are about the only time this topic might come up.

**Mature Game:** The PCs might hunt down their latest villain, a serial rapist, in the streets of a well-known city in the campaign and bring him to justice. Or, this terrible act might be a villain's modus operandi to show his power over his captured foes. It might even be an implied threat to captured PCs (but it should not happen).

**Vile Game:** An enemy or a maniac might rape a PC. Characters who are not good aligned might pressure a captive for more information by threatening rape.

## Extreme Gore and Violence

Every D&D game includes some level of violence, but there's a big difference between the DM saying, "You sustain an awful blow and lose 13 hit points as a result," and "You sustain an awful blow, and your entrails are now dangling to your knees."

**Lighthearted Game:** The game has little gore. When the villains die, they simply fall down. When PCs take damage, they simply get hurt and lose hit points.

**Standard Game:** A vivid description of violence now and then provides useful color, but gore is still avoided.

**Mature Game:** Descriptions of graphic violence are commonplace, both in and out of battle. For example, PCs exploring the site of a battle, watching a sacrifice, or learning the requirements demanded for an unholy ritual might see terrible gore.

**Vile Game:** Most battles contain gruesome, realistic depictions of the gore that happens. Occasionally, over-the-top, unrealistic amounts of gore accentuate a particularly important fight.

## Sex and Lewdness

This is a touchy issue, particularly for younger players. Sexual content offers two dangers to a campaign: It can be offensive and shocking, or it can be puerile and immature.

**Lighthearted Game:** References to sex are never made, and the topic is avoided altogether. Even romance is never hinted at, except in the most superfluous way. Characters are driven by motives other than sex.

**Standard Game:** Romance can be a motivator for characters, both PC and NPC. The occasional (mildly) lewd comment, coming from an appropriate source, lends atmosphere. However, no sexual activity appears "onstage."

**Mature Game:** Lust and sex are prime motives for characters. NPCs and PCs may indulge in sexual activity, described mildly by players and the DM.

**Vile Game:** Characters engage in all manner of sexual acts and discuss taboo subjects such as necrophilia and rape (activities that NPCs might well take part in). These acts might be more than simple flavor—they might be required in the use of certain spells, rituals, or magic items.

## USING THE BOOK OF VILE DARKNESS

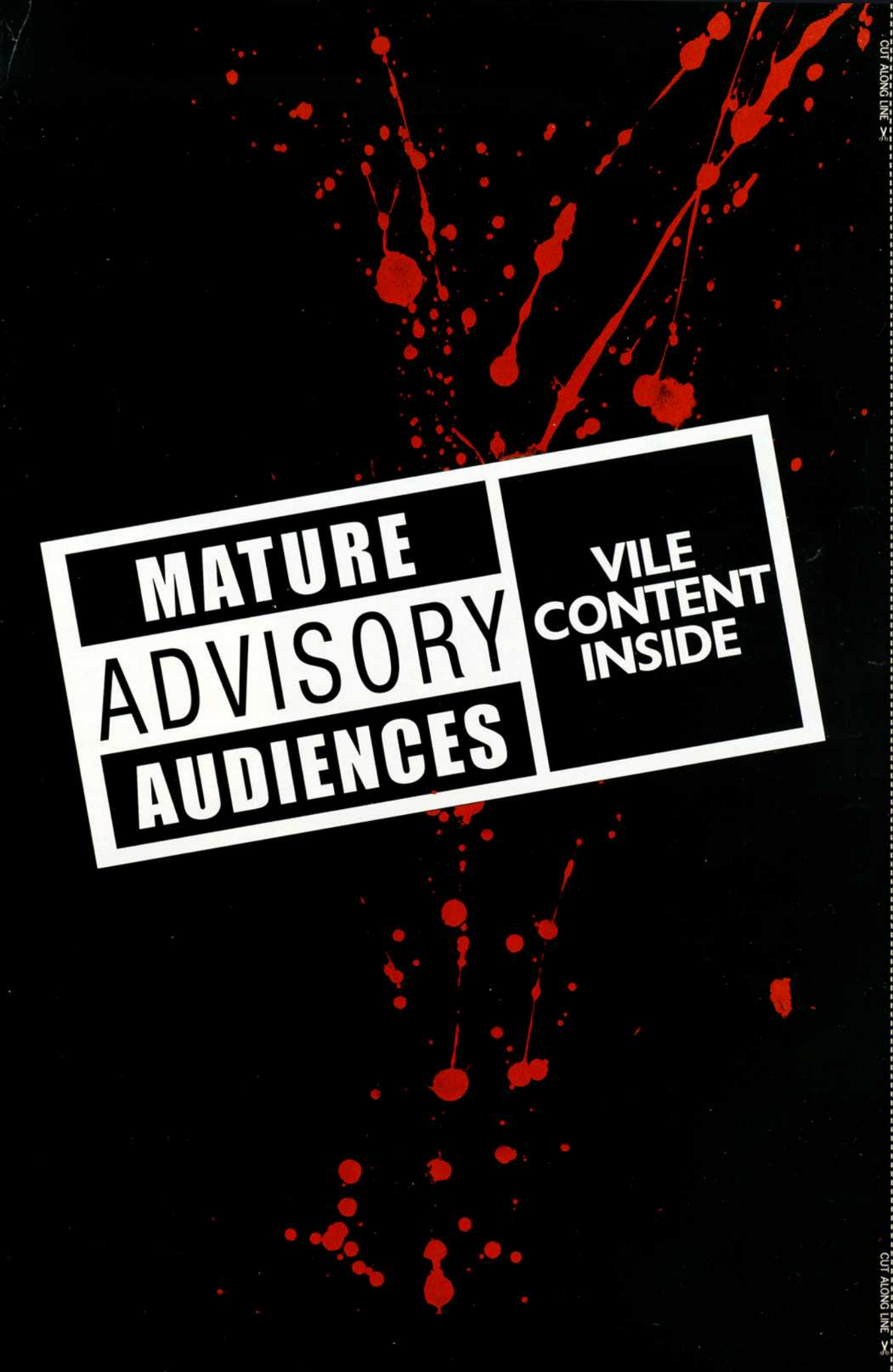
Even if your campaign isn't vile, the *Book of Vile Darkness* offers a number of new feats, prestige classes, magic items, and spells that can be used in your game.

**Lighthearted Game:** Those playing this sort of game should stick mainly with the material found in the *Player's Handbook* or the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Monsters might have some of the feats from the *Book of Vile Darkness* that enhance spell-like abilities, or perhaps villains can use one or two of the most basic spells found in the book.

**Standard Game:** For the most part, the PCs should not be forced to make moral decisions when simply choosing the spells they prepare for an adventure, or the feats and classes they choose for their character. Most of the feats found in the *Book of Vile Darkness* are usable in a standard game, although they should be reserved for evil NPCs only. NPCs can be from a few of the more straightforward classes presented in the *Book of Vile Darkness*. The non-corrupt spells in the *Book of Vile Darkness* are tools villains often employ in this type of campaign. The evil artifacts presented in the book are the objects of campaign-long quests to find and destroy. Player characters don't use drugs, but extremely evil villains might use the torture equipment described in the book. Many of the magic items are not appropriate, and the DM should not include any of the evil spell components listed for some of the book's spells.

**Mature Game:** All of the feats, spells, and magic items in the *Book of Vile Darkness* are available to evil characters and NPCs, but the prestige classes should be reserved mainly for NPCs. Distasteful prestige classes, such as the cancer mage, should still be handled with caution. Both NPCs and characters may use drugs, and if they do, they should face the harsh realities of addiction. The PCs are often faced with the dilemma of using a power or item that is actually evil—this temptation becomes a facet of the game.

**Vile Game:** Many of the PCs take one or two of the feats in the *Book of Vile Darkness*—or they are tempted to do so. Some PCs might actually pledge their allegiance to an evil god, and thus take the Thrall to Demon or Disciple of Darkness feat. It is common for NPCs to take prestige classes presented in the book, and even PCs take levels in these classes. Corrupt spells are an important part of the game, and PCs might occasionally find need to use such spells, despite the damage they inflict upon the caster. Characters most likely use poison and sometimes even drugs, and they likely wouldn't shirk from using most of the magic items detailed in the *Book of Vile Darkness*.




CUT ALONG LINE

CUT ALONG LINE

# SECRETS OF THE SKINSCRIBES

by James Jacobs · illustrated by Scott Fischer

Most necromancers, warped by the foul energies of their magic, take their spells with them to the grave. However, there was one notable exception: the Skinscribes of the Black Veil. These ancient Sueloise wizards were as jealous and possessive of their magical discoveries as any other, but they also realized that by not sharing their discoveries with like-minded individuals, they were crippling their own research. Thus, they founded the Order of the Skinscribes, a select and secret group of necromancers who gathered once a year in secret lairs and tombs throughout the world to compare and share their discoveries.

These skinscribes held no greater fear than their own vicious spells being turned against them. Lest another steal their secrets, they recorded their vile rituals only on their own skin, tattooed with blood and magical inks. Until the recent discovery of skinscribe mummies, their horrid rituals had been lost to the world. Now, these tools of evil are once again exposed.

### ATROPHY

Necromancy [Evil]
**Level:** Sor/Wiz 5
**Components:** V, S, M
**Casting Time:** 1 round
**Range:** Short (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
**Target:** One living creature
**Duration:** Instantaneous
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell has two linked effects. A victim of *atrophy* immediately suffers 1d8 points of Dexterity damage and 1d8 points of Constitution damage. In addition, the victim's arms and legs wither and become nearly useless. A victim of an *atrophy* spell suffers a 25% failure chance each time he attempts an action that requires the use of his arms; this includes attacking with weapons or casting spells with somatic components. Additionally, the victim's base speed is cut in half, and he cannot run. The victim's appendages remain atrophied until all ability damage caused by this spell is healed, either through natural rest or magical restoration. A successful Fortitude saving throw halves the ability damage and negates the failure chance and speed reduction.

If the victim of an *atrophy* spell fails to resist the full effects of the spell, a magical link manifests between the victim and the caster. This link siphons a portion of the victim's pain and anguish to the caster, who receives this energy as a +2 enhancement bonus that lasts for a number of minutes equal to the caster's level. This enhancement bonus can be applied either to any one ability score, skill check, or saving throw, at the caster's choice. Since this is an enhancement bonus, it does not stack with itself or with enhancement bonuses granted by other effects.

*Material Component:* A patch of dried skin taken from a dead body.

### CORRUPT MAGIC

Corrupt spells (those with "Corrupt" listed as a component) never have material components. Instead, they draw power from the mental or physical well-being of the caster in the form of temporary ability score damage or permanent ability score drain. The ability score damage or drain occurs when the spell's duration ends. Thus, there are never corrupt spells with a permanent duration.

If a corrupt spell is made into potion, scroll, wand, or other magic item, the user of the item pays the corruption cost, not the creator. The corruption cost is paid each time the item is used.

Corrupt spells are specific to no character class. Furthermore, they aren't inherently divine or arcane spells; a divine caster casting a corrupt spell casts it as a divine spell, and an arcane caster casts it as an arcane spell.

### BLOOD SIPHON

Necromancy [Evil]
**Level:** Sor/Wiz 3
**Components:** V, S
**Casting Time:** 1 action
**Range:** Short (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
**Target:** One bleeding creature
**Duration:** 1 round/level
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell can only be cast on a living creature that is bleeding (either damaged by a piercing or slashing weapon in the last round, unconscious and dying, or suffering from a wounding effect). If the victim fails to resist the spell, her blood suddenly leaps into an unholy life, slithering out of her wounds and onto the surface of her body.

Once the blood animates, it forms writhing liquid tendrils that rapidly seek out the caster. The victim of the spell suffers 1 point of Strength damage per round as the blood continues to writhe out of her wounds. The blood tendrils slither through the air at a speed of 20 ft., seeking to attach to the caster. Solid barriers prevent the tendrils from reaching the caster, but they can slither around objects and creatures, and through tiny gaps (such as under closed doors). Once the blood reaches the caster, it automatically attaches and transfers the victim's

life essence into the caster. Each round the connection persists, the caster gains a +1 enhancement bonus to Strength for each point of Strength the target loses. When the spell ends, any bonus to the caster's Strength score ends as well. Strength lost by the victim must be regained through magic or rest.

The animated blood vanishes (along with any Strength bonus the caster has gained from the spell) if the victim receives any amount of magical healing. However, if the victim is wounded with a slashing or piercing weapon after being healed and while the *blood siphon* is still in effect, the blood from the new wound animates and begins to seek out the caster as detailed above.

### BLOOD BLISTER

Transmutation
**Level:** Sor/Wiz 1
**Components:** V, S, F
**Casting Time:** 1 action
**Range:** Short (25 feet + 5 feet/2 levels)
**Target:** One living creature
**Duration:** 1 hour/level
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

When this spell is cast, the caster makes a twisting motion in the air with a pair of tongs. If the victim fails to resist the spell, several foul-smelling, disgusting blood blisters arise on the victim's face. These blisters burst and weep infected blood over the course of a minute before fading away. As long as the blisters are present, the victim suffers a -4 circumstance penalty to all Charisma-based skill checks, as well as a -1 penalty to all Will saving throws due to a terrible depression they bring on.

Although the blisters persist for only a minute, the spell itself persists for one hour per caster level. During this time, if the victim attempts any Charisma-based skill check, the blood blisters immediately resurface on his face for another minute, imparting the -4 circumstance penalty to that check and any other Charisma-based checks made for the remainder of that minute.

*Focus:* A pair of iron tongs.

### BONE SOFTEN

Transmutation
**Level:** Sor/Wiz 2
**Components:** V
**Casting Time:** 1 action
**Range:** Touch
**Target:** Vertebrate creature touched
**Duration:** 1 minute/level
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell softens the bone structures of the recipient. The spell does not dramatically change the target's overall shape, as the bones are still strong enough to maintain it, but the bones become flexible and resistant to bludgeoning damage. A character under the effects of this spell gains damage reduction 5/— against bludgeoning attacks. Unfortunately, this softening of the bones terribly weakens the target as well. For the duration of the spell, the victim suffers a -4 circumstance penalty to Strength and Constitution; this penalty cannot reduce either ability below 1.

A character under the effects of a *bone soften* spell can easily escape bonds and chains, and gains a +20 bonus to Escape Artist checks. This spell does not soften bones enough to allow someone to slip under a door crack or any opening narrower than 6 inches.

The physical sensations of a *bone soften* spell can be strangely addictive. This spell has an addiction rating of Low; rules for addiction can be found in the *Book of Vile Darkness* or *Lords of Darkness*. If you do not have access to one of these books, ignore this side effect, add a Somatic component to the spell, and increase its casting time to 1 round.

### BONE SPURS

Necromancy [Evil]
**Level:** Sor/Wiz 5
**Components:** V, S
**Casting Time:** 1 action
**Range:** Close (25 feet + 5 feet/2 levels)
**Target:** One living creature
**Duration:** 1 round/4 levels
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

Those who successfully resist this spell suffer a flash of pain and take 2d6 points of damage. A victim who fails her save falls prone, dazed by pain as jagged bone spurs grow out of her body. These spurs cut skin and tissue to ribbons. Each round the spell persists, it causes 4d6 points of damage and 2 points of Dexterity damage to the victim. This damage also applies to any armor or clothing worn by the victim. While the bone spurs grow, slithering bands of energy lance out of the victim's body, inflicting 1d6 points of vile damage to all living creatures within 5 feet of the victim each round. (Unlike regular damage, vile damage can only be heald by magic cast within the area of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell.)

Once the spell's duration ends, new bone spur growth is halted, but the magical disease continues to course through the victim's body. The victim may make a new Fortitude saving throw once a day to recover from the disease; each failed saving throw results in 1 point of Charisma damage as the bone spurs continue to grow into fantastic shapes much like antlers. A successful saving throw indicates that the victim has recovered from the disease. Once the victim recovers from the disease, the exposed bone spurs die and fall off, leaving the victim's body badly scarred and deformed. A *wish, miracle, limited wish, regeneration,* or *heal* spell cures the bone spurs and any lingering deformity. Casting any of these spells or a *remove disease* spell on an afflicted victim during the duration of the spell ends the spell and cures the victim.

### CONTROL BLOOD

Transmutation
**Level:** Sor/Wiz 4
**Components:** V, S, M, Drug
**Casting Time:** 1 action
**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
**Target:** One living creature
**Duration:** 1 round/level (D)
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude half
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell causes the target's blood to form dangerous clots or to become thin and watery. The exact effects of the spell vary, depending

on which effect the caster chooses to manifest.

**Blood Clotting:** The target's blood becomes thick and syrupy, forming dangerous and painful clots along the joints. Each round the spell persists, the victim must make a Fortitude saving throw to resist suffering 1 point of Constitution damage. The victim suffers a -2 circumstance penalty to attack rolls and skill checks regardless of the saving throw result for the spell's duration. While under the effects of this spell, the victim is immune to wounding effects caused by blood loss, and if reduced to less than 0 hit points, has a 50% chance to stabilize each round. This spell counters and dispels the blood-thinning version of the *control blood* spell.

**Blood Thinning:** The target's blood becomes thin and watery. Each time the victim suffers a wound, the wound bleeds for an additional 1 point of damage each round while the spell persists. Multiple wounds result in cumulative blood loss. A successful Heal check (DC 15) or the application of any cure wounds spells or a *heal* spell stops the bleeding. A victim reduced to less than 0 hit points cannot stabilize naturally and quickly bleeds to death. This spell counters and dispels the blood-clotting version of the *control blood* spell.

*Material Component:* A pinch of calcium and a drop of water.

*Drug Component:* The caster of this spell must be under the effects of agony. The effects of taking agony are detailed in the *Book of Vile Darkness*. If you do not have access to this book, treat this drug component as a material component with a cost of 200 gp.

### CORPSEBOND

Necromancy [Evil]
**Level:** Clr 6, Sor/Wiz 5
**Components:** V, S, M, Drug
**Casting Time:** 1 minute
**Range:** 0
**Target:** Personal
**Duration:** 1 hour/level
**Saving Throw:** None
**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell transfers flesh and bone from a corpse onto the caster's body, providing a sickly second skin that transfers damage done to her to the corpse. Only the most depraved spellcasters make use of this spell, as it requires the caster to engage in necrophilia.

During the casting of this spell, the caster must copulate with a corpse of any size or shape. As the spell is cast, strips of tissue and shards of bone peel off the carcass to merge with the caster's body. The caster's skin thickens and develops scales and ridges of horn and bone that become infused with dark purple and brown energies. These vile energies provide excellent protection against negative energy. Against Necromancy spells, the caster gains a spell resistance of 10 + his caster level. In addition, all physical damage done to the caster while this spell is in effect is equally split between the caster and the bonded corpse. For the purposes of this spell, the corpse has 5 hit points per caster level. Damage done directly to the corpse is not transferred to the caster; the corpse takes all such damage. If the corpse is reduced to 0 hit points, made undead, or otherwise destroyed, the spell's effect ends. Inflict wounds spells can repair damage done to the corpse as if it were an undead creature; likewise, healing magic can damage the corpse as if it were an undead creature. Magical healing applied to the caster is not split between the two, but inflict wounds damage is. The distance between the caster and the corpse does not matter, as long as both are on the same plane. Wearing the strands of flesh, entrails, and bone does not incur an armor check penalty, reduction in speed, or arcane spell failure. When the spell's duration ends, the bone plates, extra flesh, and viscera tear away and drop off the caster's body. This process causes 3d6 points of subdual damage to the caster.

*Material Component:* A corpse to bond with.

*Drug Component:* The caster of this spell must be under the effects of the drug vodare, otherwise the spell effects end on the round it is cast. This causes the bone plates that form to tear away, causing 3d6 points of subdual damage. The effects of taking vodare are detailed in the *Book of Vile Darkness*. If you do not have access to this book, treat this drug component as a material component with a cost of 40 gp.

### CURSE OF PAIN ETERNAL

Enchantment [Evil]
**Level:** Corrupt 7
**Components:** V, S, Corrupt
**Casting Time:** 1 action
**Range:** Short (25 feet + 5 feet/2 levels)
**Target:** One living creature
**Duration:** 10 minutes/level
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates (see text)
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This is a terrible and powerful spell that strips the ability to heal damage. To enact this potent magic, the caster simply points at the intended victim and utters a short invocation. The victim may not make a saving throw to avoid this spell if she already has the masochism or self-mutilation fetish.

Once cursed, the victim can no longer heal wounds, either naturally or by magical methods; the wounds simply never close. Wounds do not continue to bleed, become infected, or cause additional damage over time.

Poison, disease, infection from other wounds, ability damage, negative levels, and drug addiction can be cured normally. Removing this curse is possible with a *break enchantment, wish, limited wish,* or *miracle* spell. A *remove curse* spell cast by a spellcaster of equal or higher level than the original caster grants a second saving throw to the victim to throw off the curse. If the victim's second save fails, all further attempts to remove the curse with *remove curse* fail as well.

When the spell ends, the victim gains the masochism fetish. This grants the victim a +4 circumstance bonus to saving throws against pain effects, and if she ever takes damage equal to or greater than her character level in a round, she gains a +1 circumstance bonus on attack and damage rolls, skill checks, and saving throws for the following round. This fetish remains even if the *curse of pain eternal* is removed before the duration ends. An

*atonement, greater restoration, miracle,* or *wish* spell can remove the fetish, otherwise the fetish is permanent.

*Corruption Cost:* 1d6 points of Charisma damage.

### PUTREFACTION

Necromancy (Evil)
**Level:** Corrupt 9
**Components:** V, S, Corrupt
**Casting Time:** 1 round
**Range:** Touch
**Target:** One living creature
**Duration:** See text
**Saving Throw:** None
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This powerful spell causes the victim to begin aging rapidly. Each round, the victim's age category increases by one: from adulthood to middle age, middle age to old age, old age to venerable age, and venerable age to death. While this rapid aging persists, the victim is wracked with pain and is stunned. As soon as the victim's age goes beyond venerable, his body dies and the accelerated aging stops. This spell has no effect on dragons or other creatures that do not age in the standard fashion.

When the victim dies, his body immediately animates as a zombie under the control of the caster. Additionally, the victim's soul transforms into a ghost that cannot move more than 30 feet from the caster. This ghost gains all the powers as listed in the ghost's description in the *Monster Manual,* but the vile energies of the spell cause the ghost to become evil. The caster of the spell can control the ghost and zombie as if she had used negative energy to command undead, although minions created by this spell do not count against the total undead that can be controlled if the caster has the ability to command undead by channeling negative energy. The caster can control a number of ghosts created by this spell equal to her Charisma bonus, with a minimum of one. Additional ghosts created by this spell are free-willed but are favorably disposed toward the caster.

The effects of this spell are extremely difficult to reverse. As long as the aging is still in process, a *dispel evil* spell followed by a successful *break enchantment* spell halts the aging. A second *break enchantment* spell can then restore the victim's proper age. Temporal stasis stops the advance of the spell, but it continues on its course if the stasis is ever lifted. Once the body dies, only a carefully worded *wish* or *miracle* spell can reverse the effects.

*Corruption Cost:* 1d6 points of Constitution damage.

### SEARING SEED

Conjuration (Calling) [Evil]
**Level:** Corrupt 8
**Components:** V, S, Corrupt
**Casting Time:** 1 action
**Range:** Close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
**Target:** One living creature
**Duration:** See text
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial (see text)
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This foul spell calls upon the seed of an unknown evil outsider. The seed manifests as a surging beam of black and red fluid that arcs out of your fingers to strike the targeted creature; you must succeed at a ranged touch attack to strike the target. If the target is struck, it must make a Fortitude saving throw. Success indicates that it merely takes 1d6 points of subdual damage per level of the caster (maximum 25d6) as the searing seed burns through its entrails but fails to find purchase. Failure indicates that the victim takes no subdual damage, but the seed impregnates it and begins to gestate.

Over the next 1d3 rounds, the victim's abdomen grows huge and distended at an alarming rate. Each round of gestation, the victim is nauseated. During this time, the spell can be dispelled, but after the gestation period ends, the terrible mockery within is "born," and it claws its way to the outside. This birthing process causes 2d6 points of Constitution damage to the victim. In addition, the victim also takes 1d6 points of damage per caster level, to a maximum of 25d6 damage. A successful Fortitude save halves the amount of damage done. Male victims of this spell suffer double the Constitution damage (4d6 points) and a -6 circumstance penalty to their Fortitude saving throw to halve the damage done, since their bodies are not normally capable of giving birth.

The vile, teratic baby is superficially similar to its birthing parent, save that it is twisted and evil in shape. While initially the size of an infant, it grows to adulthood in a single round. During this round of growth, the baby is considered helpless, and it has the same statistics as its parent. After the creature is grown, it appears to be a fiendish mockery of its parent. It shares the same statistics (including any class levels) as its parent victim, save that it has the half-fiend template and is evilly aligned. The child-beast possesses a terrible hatred for its birth parent and attempts to kill its parent immediately. It is otherwise its own beast, under no compulsion to follow the orders of the caster.

*Corruption Cost:* 1d4 points of Constitution drain.

### VILEBLADE

Conjuration (Creation) [Evil]
**Level:** Corrupt 6
**Components:** V, S, Corrupt
**Casting Time:** 1 action
**Range:** 0
**Effect:** Sword-like beam
**Duration:** 1 round/level
**Saving Throw:** Will partial (see text)
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell draws out and temporarily crystallizes a sword-shaped portion of the caster's soul that springs out from his hand. The caster wields this blade-like beam as if it were a *+4 unholy longsword.* All the relevant feats, such as Weapon Focus (longsword), apply. If the caster doesn't have Martial Weapon Proficiency (longsword), he may still wield a *vileblade* without penalty. Instead of adding his Strength bonus to attack and damage rolls made with the *vileblade,* the caster adds his Charisma bonus. In addition, all damage caused by the *vileblade* is treated as vile damage. (Unlike regular damage, vile damage can only be healed by magic cast within the area of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell.) A *vileblade* deals double damage against creatures with the opposite alignment of the caster. If a creature is critically struck by a *vileblade,* a portion of the caster's personality

"infects" the wounded creature unless it makes a successful Will saving throw. The alignment of a creature infected by a *vileblade* changes to that of the caster for the duration of the spell. The infected creature views the caster as a trusted friend and ally, as though *charmed* by the caster.

*Corruption Cost:* 1d6 points of Wisdom damage.

### VILE REBELLION

Necromancy [Evil]
**Level:** Sor/Wiz 7
**Components:** V, S, M
**Casting Time:** 1 action
**Range:** Close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** See text
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial (see text)
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell causes a rebellion of the worst kind—a rebellion of the body. If the victim resists the spell, she is filled with wracking pains and is nauseated for 1d4 rounds. If the victim fails her save, she is stunned for 1d4 rounds, after which time her arms, legs, and torso separate bloodlessly and go their own ways. Only the victim's head remains under her control. The separate limbs quickly pass from life into perpetual undeath, and they are treated thereafter as zombies two sizes smaller than the target creature. The caster controls the zombies as though he had used negative energy to command undead. The victim's head remains horribly alive, sustained by the the spell, but suffers 1d3 points of Wisdom drain each round until it goes insane as per the *insanity* spell. The head can cast spells that have only verbal components, but it is otherwise helpless.

If the victim's limbs have not yet separated from her body, successfully dispelling the spell stops the progression of *vile rebellion.* Once separation occurs, however, reintegration of the living victim is possible only by bringing the body parts together and casting *dispelevil* followed by the *regeneration* spell.

*Material Component:* A severed finger.

### WALL OF MAGGOTS

Conjuration (Creation) [Evil]
**Level:** Sor/Wiz 6
**Components:** V, S, M
**Casting Time:** 1 action
**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
**Effect:** Opaque wall of maggots up to one 5-ft. cube/2 levels (S)
**Duration:** 10 minutes/level
**Saving Throw:** See text
**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell causes a wall of pale white and yellow maggots to boil up from the ground. Any creature standing in the area of a *wall of maggots* when it is created may make a Reflex saving throw to move to a randomly determined side of the wall before it forms. The maggots ravenously eat anything touching them, causing 1d4 points per two caster levels (maximum 10d4, Reflex save halves) of bite damage each round the creature remains in contact with the wall; this damage is not magical in nature, but the wall has damage reduction 15/+2 (see below), so it damages many creatures with damage reduction. Creatures caught in the wall when the spell is cast immediately take damage.

Creatures inside the *wall of maggots* have total cover and are considered entangled. They cannot see or speak; maggots fill their vision and flood into their mouths. Casting spells with a verbal component is impossible, and a creature attempting to cast a spell with a somatic component must make a Concentration check (DC 20) or lose the spell.

Anyone may attempt to move through the wall by making a Strength check or Escape Artist check, moving 5 feet for each full 5 points by which the check result exceeds 15. For every round spent within the wall, the victim takes damage (half if a successful Reflex saving throw is made). Creatures partially contained in the wall (such as a 10-foot-tall creature standing in a 5-foot cube of the *wall of maggots*) are considered entangled but they can speak and see normally so long as the appropriate parts of the body remain free; they otherwise take damage and must make Strength or Escape Artist checks to break free as normal.

A *wall of maggots* is immune to damage caused by piercing weapons. Against all other weapons it has damage reduction 15/+2. A single 5-foot cube of the wall has 10 hit points per level of the caster. It is treated as an immobile object with no hardness. See "Attack an Object" in the *Player's Handbook.*

*Material Component:* A maggot drawn from a corpse.

### WRITHING RUIN

Conjuration (Creation) [Evil]
**Level:** Corrupt 9
**Components:** V, S, Corrupt
**Casting Time:** 1 full round
**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
**Target:** 1 living creature/level, no two of which can be more than 40 ft. apart.
**Duration:** 1 minute
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell causes clots of ravenous vermin to appear in the bodies of those the caster targets. Creatures affected by the spell must make Fortitude saving throws. A creature that succeeds its saving throw suffers 1d4 points of Constitution damage and becomes nauseated for 1 round as the worms, spiders, leeches, and other vermin appear in the victim's body and writhe and roil in death. A creature that fails its save falls prone in pain and is dazed while the vermin gnaw away at their host's tissues. This gnawing causes 1d6 points of Constitution drain per round and continues until the *writhing ruin* is dispelled, the victim receives a *remove disease* spell, the caster is killed, or the duration of the spell expires. Should a creature die as a result of this spell, the body bursts open and a host of hundreds of various kinds of vermin spew forth in a 5-foot-radius spread. Any living creature in this area or entering it before the *writhing ruin*'s duration expires is affected by *writhing ruin* and must make a Fortitude saving throw to avoid becoming infested as well. All vermin created by this spell vanish when the spell's duration ends.

*Corruption Cost:* 1d4 points of Strength damage, 1d4 points of Dexterity damage.

# THE MINIONS OF DARKNESS

## More Monster Cultist Prestige Classes

by Eric Cagle · illustrated by Jonathan Wayshak

Unlike some worlds, where monsters live only in myth and mystery, beasts of blood and magic roam through D&D campaigns and hunger for servants. These monsters use power to lure the greedy, the desperate, and the weak. Whatever the reasons, evil creatures roam the world at once tempting and subjugating those unlucky enough to cross their path. Some, like the faceless doppleganger, bind their servants to them with a web of paranoia and lies; others, like the powerful kraken, present their prospective servants with a simpler dilemma—death or obedience.

The cultist prestige classes represent the extreme end of fanaticism, and the members of these classes possess both a deep, psychotic need to obey their patron creatures and the ability to walk undetected through nearly any aspect of society. Including them in a campaign brings a tinge of insanity and danger that is repulsive to some, yet at the same time, players might find defeating such foes more meaningful—in some ways measuring their character's achievements and good deeds by the amount or nature of the evil they defeat.

### THE FACELESS ONE

One could be the fish seller on the corner or the priest giving his sermon to the faithful, and it's possible that the queen is not who she says she is. They observe everything with quiet patience, changing the world without anyone knowing. They are the Faceless Ones, and they are everywhere.

Among the paranoid, there are some who believe that society has been thoroughly infiltrated by doppelgangers, and that these mutable creatures dictate the fate of nations. To these individuals, joining the ranks of the doppelgangers is their inroad to power. They seek out an elusive group of cultists who call themselves the Faceless Ones, who might or might not be actual doppelgangers themselves.

If he succeeds in finding a patron to sponsor him, a potential candidate must prove his deceitfulness by murdering a person of power and passing himself off as that person. If he succeeds, then the Faceless Ones accept him into their shadowy organization.

The faceless one then begins to use his new-found powers to infiltrate all strata of society. He gathers information, brokers deals, and uses blackmail, deceit, and lies to gain what he wants. Occasionally, a higher-ranking member of the cult asks the member to perform some task on behalf of the organization, up to and including murder. Again, the faceless one is never sure if he is receiving orders from a true doppelganger or not. Part of this pact includes the slow loss of any former identity, as the faceless one must constantly change his appearance to maintain his powers.

#### FACELESS ONE CLASS REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a faceless one, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Race:** Any humanoid or monstrous humanoid.

**Alignment:** Any evil.

**Bluff:** 8 ranks.

**Disguise:** 8 ranks.

**Special:** Must be accepted into the cult of the Faceless Ones, as well as successfully pass himself off as a person of importance for at least three days, without the use of magic. This often includes the murder of the impersonated individual.

**Spells:** Must be able to cast *alter self*.

#### FACELESS ONE CLASS SKILLS

The faceless one's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

**Str:** –

**Dex:** Hide, Move Silently.

**Con:** –

**Int:** Craft, Forgery, Knowledge (any).

**Wis:** Listen, Innuendo, Profession, Sense Motive, Spot.

**Cha:** Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Intimidate, Perform.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

**FACELESS ONE ADVANCEMENT**

HIT DIE D8

| Class Level | Attack Bonus | Fort. Save | Ref. Save | Will Save | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | +0 | +2 | +2 | +2 | *Detect thoughts* 1/day |
| 2nd | +1 | +3 | +3 | +3 | *Change self* |
| 3rd | +2 | +3 | +3 | +3 | *Detect thoughts* 2/day |
| 4th | +3 | +4 | +4 | +4 | Resistance to sleep and charm |
| 5th | +3 | +4 | +4 | +4 | *Alter self, detect thoughts* 3/day, shapechanger apotheosis |

Faceless ones show no discrimination on whom they focus their covert activities—dangerous, chaotic thieves' guilds are just as likely to be targeted as law-abiding temples of good. Because of the threat that they pose to security, the cult of the Faceless Ones is ruthlessly hunted down by almost every organization that knows of them.

Bards and rogues have the most potential to join the cult of the Faceless Ones, drawn to the ability to glide in and out of society with little hindrance. Sorcerers and wizards are just as likely to become members, as any potential candidate must have some experience with arcane magic. Druids and clerics of Olidammara occasionally become faceless ones.

## Faceless One Class Features

All of the following are class features of the faceless one prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Characters gain no new proficiency with any weapons, armor, or shields for taking a level of faceless one.

***Detect Thoughts (Sp):*** Starting at 1st level, the faceless one gains the ability to *detect thoughts* once per day as if cast by a 9th-level sorcerer. This increases to twice a day at 3rd level and three times a day at 5th level.

***Change Self (Sp):*** At 2nd level, the faceless one can *change self* at will as the spell cast by a 9th-level sorcerer.

**Resistance to Sleep and Charm (Su):** At 4th level, the faceless one gains a +4 resistance bonus against sleep and charm effects.

**Alter Self (Sp):** At 5th level, the faceless one gains the ability to change his form at will as if by the *alter self* spell cast by a 9th-level sorcerer.

**Shapechanger Apotheosis (Ex):** At 5th level, the faceless one has more in common with doppelgangers than his previous race. His natural appearance begins to become less distinct as his eyes, ears, and mouth pull into his face, leaving it more featureless. The faceless one's type changes to "shapechanger." This gives the faceless one darkvision with a range of 60 feet, if he does not already have it. Any spells or effects that target shapechangers affect faceless ones. This transformation has no effect on the faceless one's Hit Die type. In addition, the faceless one's mutable features grant him a +10 racial bonus to Disguise checks.

### Ex-Faceless Ones

A faceless one who voluntarily changes his alignment away from evil or does not use the *change self* or *alter self* ability to deceive others at least once a week, loses all class abilities until re-accepted by the Faceless Ones cult. If the faceless one has gone through the shapechanger apotheosis at 5th level, his creature type remains "shapechanger," however, representing his separation from his former life.

## The Deep Thrall

Among civilizations living along the edges of the great oceans of the world, stories of the kraken are far from myth. Some have witnessed firsthand the destruction these monsters can inflict; they have seen friends and family attacked and dragged beneath the waves by the terrifying krakens. They assume that these poor souls have drowned or were eaten, and more often than not, they are correct. However, in some cases, these supposedly lost individuals have merely been

### DEEP THRALL CLASS REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a deep thrall, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Alignment:** Neutral evil.

**Race:** Any humanoid or monstrous humanoid.

**Sense Motive:** 5 ranks.

**Swim:** 8 ranks.

**Language:** Aquan.

**Special:** The character wishing to become a deep thrall must make friendly contact with a kraken or must be a slave to the kraken. She must then accept being scarred by the kraken's tentacle.

### DEEP THRALL CLASS SKILLS

The deep thrall's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

**Str:** Swim.

**Dex:** Hide, Move Silently.

**Con:**–

**Int:** Craft, Knowledge (nature), Search.

**Wis:** Listen, Profession, Sense Motive, Spot, Wilderness Lore.

**Cha:** Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Intimidate, Perform.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 2 + Int modifier.

captured by a kraken. They are taken deep beneath the surface, where the kraken has created a watertight series of caves in which humanoids can survive. These humanoids are kept as slaves, to be used for food and amusement by their cruel overlord. Entire generations of slaves have lived in these dark caves, and over time most forget that the surface world exists.

To maintain their "schools," krakens pick out exceptional individuals and provide them with the best food, duties, and comforts. If they prove worthy, these humanoids are then marked by the kraken, which involves wrapping one of its powerful, suckered tentacles across the slave's naked form. This embrace leaves behind wounds that turn into terrible scars. From that moment on, the slave is considered a deep thrall, the servant of the mighty kraken. Through some unknown connection to her master, the deep thrall begins gaining powers.

Deep thralls are chosen to be guards and taskmasters, lording their favored positions over the other slaves. Traitors to their own people, the deep thralls cruelly enforce discipline among the slaves and keep an eye out for troublemakers and for other potential deep thralls. They actively encourage breeding among the slaves, instilling a deep sense of subservience to the kraken. Trapped deep under water, these communities can become seriously inbred, requiring a steady supply of slaves from the surface. Slaves subsist mostly on fish and other seafood, as well as the corpses of their fellow prisoners.

In addition, deep thralls are used as "ambassadors" by the kraken, undertaking missions to the surface to negotiate on behalf of their master. These deep thralls are viewed with utter revulsion by the surface dwellers they negotiate with. However, most would rather bargain and compromise than become the target of an enraged kraken. Deep thralls are also used as spies, saboteurs, and thieves for their masters. They stalk the cities and shorelines close to the kraken's territory, looking for potential food, items that the kraken might want to possess, and threats (like mustered fleets).

Deep thralls usually cloak themselves under dark hoods or use magic to hide their facial scarring. In some seaside communities, however, these individuals pass these scars off as wounds sustained from a "battle with a squid." This is usually enough to fool even the crustiest of seadogs.

Almost any class can become a deep thrall. The kraken chooses characters of different classes, based on the need at any time. Fighters, barbarians, monks, and rangers are chosen if brute strength and intimidation are required. Rogues and bards are picked for infiltration work and information gathering. Wizards and sorcerers are prized for spellcasting ability. Krakens seem to have little use for clerics, considering themselves above the powers of the deities of the surface dwellers, and rarely choose members of this class.

Deep thralls of a single kraken work together in tightly knit groups, coordinating their efforts for the greater good of their master. They are antagonistic, or at least coolly neutral, to deep thralls of other krakens that they might encounter during their missions.

### Deep Thrall Class Features

All of the following are class features of the deep thrall prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** A character gains no new proficiency with any weapons, armor, or shields for taking a level of deep thrall.

**Amphibious (Ex):** At 1st level, the deep thrall develops gills on the sides of her neck, allowing her to breathe water as well as air. When not in use, these gills are not detectable at a glance (no Spot DC) but can be seen by careful examination (Search DC 10).

**Telepathic Link (Su):** A deep thrall has a telepathic connection with her patron kraken. The kraken can see through the deep thrall's eyes. The deep thrall cannot see through the eyes of the kraken, although she is constantly aware of the kraken's location and emotional state. The two can communicate telepathically. This ability has a range of up to 500 miles.

**Resist Elements (Su):** At 2nd level, the deep thrall become accustomed to the chill of the deep, gaining cold resistance 5.

**Ability Boost:** At 3rd level, the deep thrall's brain and skull begins to expand, increasing her Intelligence score by 2 points.

**Malleable Arms (Ex):** At 4th level, the deep thrall's arms become incredibly flexible, moving more like tentacles than normal humanoid limbs. The tentacle-arms can be stretched up to 5 additional feet, effectively giving the deep thrall 5 more feet of reach.

**Constrict (Ex):** At 5th level, if the deep thrall makes a successful grapple attack against Medium-size or smaller opponents, she can constrict. This attack does 1d6 points of damage in addition to her unarmed strike damage.

**Kraken Apotheosis (Ex):** At 5th level, the deep thrall's connection with her patron kraken has irreversible effects on her body. Her skin becomes rubbery like a squid, and her eyes grow to a huge size. The deep thrall's creature type changes to "monstrous humanoid (aquatic)." This provides the deep thrall with darkvision with a range of 60 feet, if she does not already have it. Any spells or effects that target monstrous humanoids or aquatic creatures affect the deep thrall. This transformation has no effect on the deep thrall's Hit Die type.

### Ex-Deep Thralls

When a deep thrall manages to sever the telepathic link with the kraken that she is connected to, or if the kraken is killed, the deep thrall loses a great deal. No longer having access to the awesome intellect of the kraken, the deep thrall loses her ability boost to Intelligence, as well as the ability to breathe water. Deep thralls who have attained 4th level retain the use of their malleable arms ability. If the deep thrall has gone through the apotheosis at 5th level, her creature type remains "monstrous humanoid (aquatic)."

It is possible for an ex-deep thrall to regain these abilities if she manages to reestablish a link with a kraken, even if it is not the same patron. She must undergo the same scarification ritual, further disfiguring her face. However, few krakens are willing to take back a deep thrall who has betrayed them, although some gladly take in an ex-deep thrall of another kraken, seeing it as an advantage to be used against its rival.

## The Shoal Servant

The uncaring ocean holds ancient evils and vile secrets, and few of the alien

**THE DEEP THRALL ADVANCEMENT**

HIT DIE d10

| Class Level | Attack Bonus | Fort. Save | Ref. Save | Will Save | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | +1 | +2 | +0 | +0 | Amphibious, telepathic link |
| 2nd | +2 | +3 | +0 | +0 | Resist elements (cold) |
| 3rd | +3 | +3 | +1 | +1 | Ability boost (+2 Int) |
| 4th | +4 | +4 | +1 | +1 | Malleable arms |
| 5th | +5 | +4 | +1 | +1 | Constrict, kraken apotheosis |

### FOR YOUR CHARACTER

Many of the prestige classes mentioned in this article represent evil beings dedicated to serving their monstrous masters. As written, they are intended exclusively for NPCs. However, they can be used in campaigns that feature evil characters performing vile and blasphemous deeds in the name of their evil deities. They all present the first, and terrifying, step to crossing the line that separates monsters from the rest of the world. Note that playing evil characters is a choice not made lightly, and even one evil PC can easily ruin a campaign if not handled maturely and carefully. Some advice on playing evil characters can be found in the *Book of Vile Darkness*, but there is no substitute for discussing these issues with the other players. If you don't want to play an evil character, there are ways you can use these prestige classes as a player.

- If your DM removes the requirements for being evil or allows players to ignore the penalties for leaving the class, these prestige classes can then represent crusaders who hunt down the monsters that they once worshiped. There are many intriguing ideas that deal with the same set of prestige class abilities representing those who adopt the powers. In all cases, the player and DM should work out alternate sources of the character's powers.
- Your character could come from a family burdened with a cult member. The dangerous monster that corrupted your family once is both a target and temptation, shaping many of your decisions even as you seek to destroy it. As long as your DM is willing, you could take levels in the appropriate prestige class without forming the bond with the patron creature.
- A prestige class without the attack bonus and saving throw progressions boils down to a short list of special abilities. Granting the special abilities from a class to a creature without requiring levels is a quick way to create a template. If you use this quick-and-dirty means of creating a template, the classes in this article all adjust the monster's CR by +1. If you discuss the idea with your DM first, you might even be allowed to summon creatures with the "deep thrall" template rather than the fiendish or celestial template. Since only the tiger mask becomes an outsider, *summon nature's ally* might be a more appropriate spell for templates derived from the other prestige classes.

### SHOAL SERVANT CLASS REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a shoal servant, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Alignment:** Neutral evil.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +5.

**Feats:** Great Fortitude.

**Patron:** Blibdoolpoolp.

**Race:** Any humanoid.

**Special:** Must stand at the seashore and allow the tide to rise and ebb around him three times, before being blessed by a kuo-toan cleric.

**Spellcasting:** Must be able to cast divine spells.

### SHOAL SERVANT CLASS SKILLS

The shoal servant's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

**Str:** Swim.

**Dex:** Escape Artist, Move Silently.

**Con:** Concentration.

**Int:** Craft, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (nature), Knowledge (religion), Scry, Search, Spellcraft (Int).

**Wis:** Profession, Spot, Wilderness Lore.

**Cha:** Bluff, Diplomacy.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 2 + Int modifier.

menaces concealed in the depths hold as much enmity against the surface dwelling races as the kuo-toas, an ancient race that has long since retreated to the depths. They shun others and are content to worship their Sea Mother goddess, Blibdoolpoolp. Although rarely seen by those on the surface, occasionally kuo-toas make contact with shore communities to raid, infiltrate, or further other alien goals. In some distant villages, kuo-toa take over, raping and pillaging at will. They force the local populace to worship their foul goddess, killing anyone who tries to fight back. The vile kuo-toas often breed with those they conquer, creating dedicated kin through a carefully planned combination of fear, subjugation, and forced procreation. Over generations, loyal individuals become more like the kuo-toas they venerate, turning their backs on the people they once knew. To the kuo-toas, they are known as shoal servants—beings that act as liaisons between the shore and sea.

Kuo-toas accept these strange beings, seeing them as useful tools to perform tasks on the surface that they would rather avoid. While their alien mindset prevents them from viewing non-kuo-toans with anything other than contempt and distrust, they do not question the actions of Blibdoolpoolp and treat shoal servants with a grudging acceptance.

Shoal servants spread worship of Blibdoolpoolp among the surface races through slow, subtle conversion. Shoal servants in positions of power use that power to the advantage of the kuo-toas. They redirect ship traffic toward or away from kuo-toan communities, kidnap people for food and slaves, and seek out knowledge that is otherwise inaccessible from beneath the waves. In most cases, shoal servants use quiet and hidden methods to perform these tasks, knowing that most civilized races hate and fear the kuo-toas and their warped servants. Because of this, most shoal servants choose to flee when confronted with danger, although when cornered, they become truly ferocious.

Individuals chosen by the kuo-toas to become shoal servants are usually contacted through a series of disturbing dreams. Over the course of a month, the candidate is inexplicably drawn to the seashore, where he must stand and allow the tide to rise and ebb around him at least three times. At that time, a kuo-toan cleric rises from the briny water and finishes the ritual, binding the individual to the deity Blibdoolpoolp.

Because devout worship of Blibdoolpoolp is required, most shoal servants are clerics. Druids who have turned their backs on the "rational" deities of the core races find the primal power and outlook of Blibdoolpoolp intoxicating. Fighters, rogues, and rangers, especially those who are used to working on ships or near shorelines, sometimes hear the call of this prestige class. Sorcerers

and wizards who work with the raw forces of the storm and turbulent ocean sometimes become shoal servants, seeking out the ancient and long-forgotten knowledge held by the kuo-toas. Bards who become shoal servants are exceedingly rare.

Unlike members of the other cultist prestige classes presented in this article, shoal servants commonly work together. They are rarely entrusted by the kuo-toas to perform tasks alone, so groups are often escorted by one kuo-toan overseer.

## Shoal Servant Class Features

All of the following are class features of the shoal servant prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Shoal servants are proficient with all simple weapons, but characters gain no new proficiency with armor or shields from taking a level of the class.

**Spellcasting:** A shoal servant continues training in magic. Thus, at 2nd and 4th level, the character gains new spells per day and spells known as if he had also gained a level in a divine spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved chance of controlling or rebuking undead, metamagic or item creation feats, and so on). This essentially means that he adds the level of shoal servant to the level of some other spellcasting class he has, then determines spells per day and caster level accordingly.

**Skin of the Kuo-Toa (Ex):** At 1st level, a shoal servant's skin becomes smooth and slimy like a kuo-toa. This coating gives the shoal servant a +4 circumstance bonus to Escape Artist and Swim checks as long as he is not wearing armor and is not carrying a heavy load. Like kuo-toas, the shoal servant's skin shifts coloration, depending on his mood.

**Resistance to Poison and Paralysis (Ex):** At 1st level, the shoal servant gains a +4 resistance bonus to saving throws against the effects of poison and paralysis.

**Amphibious (Ex):** At 2nd level, shoal servants develop gills on the sides of their necks, allowing them to breathe water as well as air. They can survive indefinitely on land or under water. When not in use, these gills are not detectable at a glance (no Spot DC) but can be seen by careful examination (Search DC 10).

**Eyes of the Kuo-Toa (Ex):** At 3rd level, the shoal servant's eyes grow huge and more acute. Like the kuo-toa, the shoal servant can now spot creatures and objects even if they are invisible, ethereal, or astral. Only by remaining perfectly still can such objects or creatures avoid notice. He also gains a +1 circumstance bonus to Search and Spot checks.

The main disadvantage to this ability is that the shoal servant's eyes are now affected by light blindness. Abrupt exposure to bright light (such as sunlight or a *daylight* spell) blinds the shoal servant for 1 round. In addition, he suffers a -1 circumstance penalty to all attack rolls, saves, and skill checks while operating in bright light.

**Bite of the Kuo-Toa (Ex):** At 4th level, the shoal servant's mouth grows huge and sprouts numerous needle-like teeth. The shoal servant can make a bite attack for 1d4 points of damage.

**Lightning Bolt (Su):** Two or more shoal servants operating together can generate a 10-foot-wide, 60-foot-long stroke of lightning every 1d4 rounds. The shoal servants must join hands to launch the bolt. In rounds between uses of this ability, the shoal servants must remain within 30 feet of another shoal servant; any round in which a shoal servant is more than 30 feet away from at least one other shoal servant does not count against the number of rounds that must elapse before they can use this ability again. The lightning bolt deals 1d6 points of damage per shoal servant, but a successful Reflex save halves this amount (save DC 13 + the number of shoal servants). This ability functions much like the kuo-toa's lightning bolt ability, and kuo-toan clerics and shoal servants with the lightning bolt ability can work together to generate lightning bolts (meaning that one kuo-toa and one 5th-level shoal servant can activate this ability).

**Kuo-Toa Apotheosis (Ex):** At 5th level, the shoal servant begins to transform into a twisted parody of his former self. The shoal servant looks like a larger and more "human" version of a kuo-toa, although there is no difficulty in differentiating between the two. The shoal servant's creature type permanently changes to "monstrous humanoid (aquatic)." This provides the shoal servant with darkvision with a range of 60 feet, if he does not already have it. Any spells or effects that target monstrous humanoids and/or aquatic creatures affects shoal servants. This transformation has no effect on the shoal servant's Hit Die type.

### Ex-Shoal Servants

A shoal servant who leaves this prestige class or ceases worshiping Blibdoolpoolp loses many of the abilities of this prestige class. If he has reached the required levels, he loses the skin of the kuo-toa ability, the ability to breathe water, and the lightning bolt ability. His enlarged mouth still retains the ability to deal damage

**SHOAL SERVANT ADVANCEMENT**

HIT DIE D8

| Class Level | Attack Bonus | Fort. Save | Ref. Save | Will Save | Special | Spellcasting |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | +0 | +2 | +0 | +2 | Skin of the kuo-toa, resistance to poison and paralysis | |
| 2nd | +1 | +3 | +0 | +3 | Amphibious | +1 level of existing class |
| 3rd | +2 | +3 | +1 | +3 | Eyes of the kuo-toa | |
| 4th | +3 | +4 | +1 | +4 | Bite of the kuo-toa | +1 level of existing class |
| 5th | +3 | +4 | +1 | +4 | Kuo-toa apotheosis, lightning bolt | |

on bite attacks, however. A shoal servant who has reached 5th level retains the "monstrous humanoid (aquatic)" creature type and is affected by any spells or effects that target monstrous humanoids or aquatic creatures. He regains his abilities if he atones for his violations (see the *atonement* spell description in the *Player's Handbook*). However, few kuo-toas are willing to take back a shoal servant who has fallen from this prestige class.

## THE TIGER MASK

Malevolent embodiments of pure evil, rakshasas exude might, and the privileged lifestyle they enjoy brings them into contact with many easily swayed by promises of power. Those lured into the rakshasas' plots and service crave the power the tiger-like outsiders offer, and many promise the foul creatures their very soul in order to increase their own might. Rakshasas, eager for servants and comfortable living, delight in helping people with such goals. In exchange for the loyalty of beguiled or greedy power seekers, the rakshasa provides money, information, magical items, and power. The rakshasa is then treated like a deity.

Whether deceived or willing, these servants of rakshasas are known as tiger masks, both for the deception that they perform for the feline-appearing rakshasas and for the ritual masks that they wear when appearing before their lord. To further humble their minions and to show their own superiority, rakshasas require that tiger masks speak only in Infernal when addressing them.

To become a tiger mask, a potential candidate must seek out a rakshasa and pledge her undying loyalty to the creature. If she is deemed worthy and sincere (liars and weaklings are killed and eaten), the rakshasa performs a terrifying ceremony, called the "ritual of the blackened tiger," concluding with the rakshasa raking the person across the chest.

Tiger masks perform most of the mundane tasks for their masters, including theft, torture, racketeering, and murder. Their duties also include kidnapping victims for the feeding and entertainment of the rakshasa. Children are especially coveted, for their innocence provides a sweet "taste" to the infernal being. One of the first lessons the rakshasa teaches a newly created tiger mask is the proper way to flay and butcher a victim in order to make a proper meal. The tiger mask is always required to partake in the meal once it is cooked.

Tiger masks also establish drug cartels and brothels, bringing in a ready source of money and information, as well as sowing the seeds of corruption in the community. Would-be tiger masks are usually chosen by rakshasas because of the high place that they hold in society. They provide the rakshasa with vital information, as well as access to otherwise forbidden areas. Tiger masks provide the framework from which rakshasas can operate,corrupting good people and organizations.

Tiger masks provide another, lesser-known purpose. Because of their special ability to draw in arrows and crossbow bolts (especially blessed crossbow bolts), rakshasas surround themselves with tiger masks as a form of defense. Few tiger masks are informed about this before they commit themselves to their rakshasa lords, and those who object never live long once their patron rakshasa knows they harbor doubts about their service.

Tiger masks are commonly found among the spellcasting classes. Sorcerers, wizards, and evil clerics are drawn to the power granted by this class, as well as the mundane influence provided by their patron. Rogues are also drawn to this class, relishing in the creature comforts and unabashed power that rakshasas give to favored minions. Evil monks who have been properly trained in the arcane arts make excellent tiger masks. Rangers and fighters who have learned the arcane arts are rare, but such individuals are sometimes found as tiger masks. Paladins are the sworn enemies of tiger masks and hunt them with tireless zeal.

Tiger masks are often found operating alone, although occasionally they are grouped together for particularly dangerous assignments. As mentioned above, during an assault, Rakshasa tries to gather as many tiger masks around it as possible.

### Tiger Mask Class Features

All of the following are class features of the tiger mask prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Characters gain no new proficiency with any weapons, armor, or shields when they take a level of tiger mask.

**Spellcasting:** A tiger mask continues training in magic. Thus, at 2nd and 4th level, the character gains new spells per day and spells known as if she had also gained a level in a spellcasting class she belonged to before she added the prestige class. She does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved chance of controlling or rebuking undead, metamagic or item creation feats, and so on). This essentially means that she adds the level of tiger mask to the level of some other

**TIGER MASK ADVANCEMENT**

HIT DIE D8

| Class Level | Attack Bonus | Fort. Save | Ref. Save | Will Save | Special | Spellcasting |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | +1 | +2 | +0 | +0 | Arrow magnet, arrow/bolt damage reduction 5/+1 | |
| 2nd | +2 | +3 | +0 | +0 | Visage of deception | +1 level of existing class |
| 3rd | +3 | +3 | +1 | +1 | Arrow/bolt damage reduction 10/+2 | |
| 4th | +4 | +4 | +1 | +1 | Claws of the tiger | +1 level of existing class |
| 5th | +5 | +4 | +1 | +1 | *Alter self* 1/day, visage of the infernal tiger | |

### TIGER MASK CLASS REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a tiger mask, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Alignment:** Lawful evil.

**Race:** Any non-monstrous humanoid.

**Diplomacy:** 5 ranks.

**Gather Information:** 8 ranks.

**Language:** Infernal.

**Special:** Must make friendly contact with a rakshasa and undergo a ritual in which she is scarred.

**Spellcasting:** Must be able to cast 2nd-level spells.

### TIGER MASK CLASS SKILLS

The tiger mask's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

**Str:**–

**Dex:** Hide, Move Silently.

**Con:** Concentration.

**Int:** Appraise, Craft.

**Wis:** Listen, Profession, Sense Motive, Spot.

**Cha:** Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Intimidate.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

spellcasting class she has, then determines spells per day and caster level accordingly.

**Arrow Magnet (Su):** At 1st level, tiger masks become more susceptible to certain ranged attacks. Any arrow or bolt (but no other form of ranged attack) that is aimed at a target within 20 feet of a tiger mask has a 50% chance of being redirected toward her. The attack is resolved as normal but as if the shot were originally aimed at the tiger mask, with missed shots having no effect. If the tiger mask has more than 50% cover, the arrow magnet ability fails to function.

**Arrow/Bolt Damage Reduction (Su):** At 1st level, the tiger mask gains damage reduction 5/+1 against any damage dealt by arrows or crossbow bolts. It provides no benefit against any other type of ranged weapon. This ability increases to 10/+2 at 3rd level.

**Visage of Deception (Ex):** At 2nd level, tiger masks gain a +2 bonus to Bluff and Disguise checks.

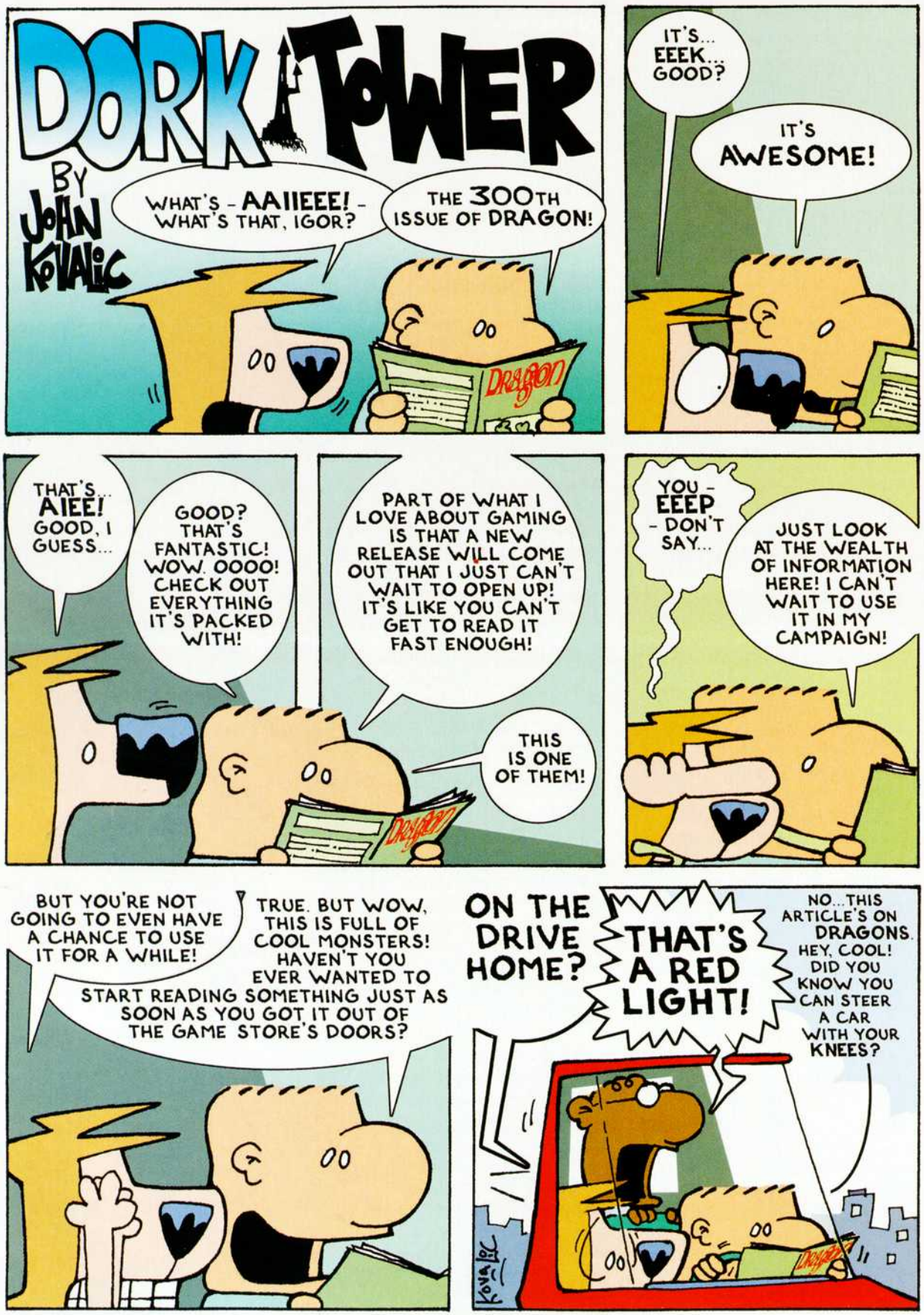
**Claws of the Tiger (Ex):** At 4th level, the tiger mask grows feline-like claws. She can make two claw attacks dealing 1d4 damage each. In addition, the hands of the tiger mask undergo a painful transformation, becoming like that of a rakshasa–her fingers bend backward, so the back of her hand now becomes her palm. This has no effect on the manual dexterity of the tiger mask.

***Alter Self (Sp):*** A 5th-level tiger mask can change her appearance once per day as if by an *alter self* spell cast by a 5th-level sorcerer.

**Visage of the Infernal Tiger (Ex):** At 5th level, the tiger mask has been changed and twisted by the power of the rakshasa. The tiger mask's face becomes that of a terrible-looking tiger and her skin is covered in a thin, dark fur. Her eyes smolder like black pits of evil. The tiger mask's creature type permanently changes to "outsider." This provides the tiger mask with darkvision with a range of 60 feet, if she does not already have it. Any spells or effects that target outsiders affect tiger masks. This transformation has no effect on the tiger mask's Hit Die type.

#### Ex-Tiger Masks

A tiger mask who disobeys her patron rakshasa or willingly strays from her alignment loses many of the abilities of this prestige class. She loses all abilities except for arrow magnet–the price to pay for making a deal with evil. Her fangs shrink to normal size, and her claws fall from her fingers, although her hands are permanently twisted in the backwards position. A tiger mask that has reached 5th level retains the "outsider" creature type and is affected by any spells or effects that target outsiders. The ex-tiger mask can regain her abilities by undergoing the "ritual of the blackened tiger," as stated in the description above. There have been no instances of a rakshasa taking back a tiger mask that it once sponsored. Rival rakshasa have no such compunction, however. D


DORK TOWER
BY JOHN KOVALIC
WHAT'S - AAIIEEE! - WHAT'S THAT, IGOR?
THE 300TH ISSUE OF DRAGON!
DRAGON
IT'S... EEEK... GOOD?
IT'S AWESOME!
THAT'S... AIEE! GOOD, I GUESS...
GOOD? THAT'S FANTASTIC! WOW. OOOO! CHECK OUT EVERYTHING IT'S PACKED WITH!
PART OF WHAT I LOVE ABOUT GAMING IS THAT A NEW RELEASE WILL COME OUT THAT I JUST CAN'T WAIT TO OPEN UP! IT'S LIKE YOU CAN'T GET TO READ IT FAST ENOUGH!
THIS IS ONE OF THEM!
YOU - EEEP - DON'T SAY...
JUST LOOK AT THE WEALTH OF INFORMATION HERE! I CAN'T WAIT TO USE IT IN MY CAMPAIGN!
BUT YOU'RE NOT GOING TO EVEN HAVE A CHANCE TO USE IT FOR A WHILE!
TRUE. BUT WOW, THIS IS FULL OF COOL MONSTERS! HAVEN'T YOU EVER WANTED TO START READING SOMETHING JUST AS SOON AS YOU GOT IT OUT OF THE GAME STORE'S DOORS?
ON THE DRIVE HOME?
THAT'S A RED LIGHT!
NO...THIS ARTICLE'S ON DRAGONS. HEY, COOL! DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN STEER A CAR WITH YOUR KNEES?
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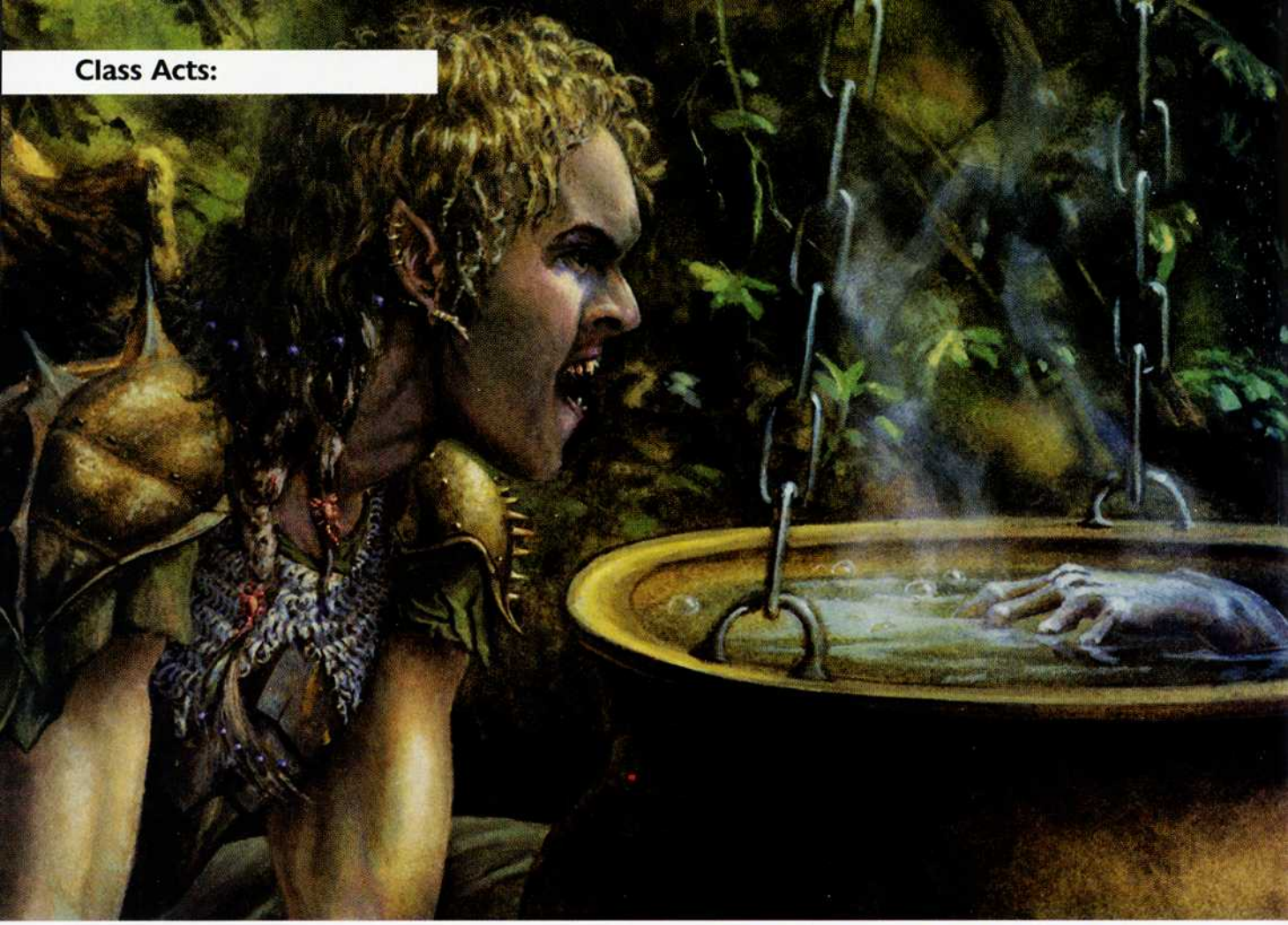


by Monte Cook · illustrated by Rob Alexander

# THE FLESHEATER

The Jerren are halflings, although they despise that name. About two hundred years ago, the Jerren were a normal, extended nomadic tribe of halflings that inhabited a dark forest. Every spring, they were beset by goblins and bugbears from the nearby hills. These raids cost the Jerren dearly in lives and food—they threatened to wipe out the halflings entirely. The leaders of the various Jerren factions gathered one winter and made a harsh decision. They called upon all the spellcasters among the Jerren and gave them access to corrupt magic that they had hidden away and forbidden. They armed each warrior with terrible poisons and weapons designed to spread disease and plague among the goblinoids.

The next spring, the ensuing war between the Jerren and their enemies threatened to wipe out both sides. Blood stained the woods. Even with their new tactics, the Jerren would have lost, except that their previous acts seemed to have opened a door to malevolence—soon the halflings committed atrocities against their enemies that repulsed even the goblins and bugbears, and when they retreated into the hills, the Jerren followed them. Soon all that were left of the goblinoids were heads upon spikes positioned throughout the hills and grisly scenes that suggested bloody sacrifices made to evil gods like Karaan and Erythnul.

Today, the forest is haunted by terrible bands of vicious halflings who prey upon any living creature that crosses their path. They seek blood and sacrifices for the unquenchable hunger of the insatiable deities to which they have sworn allegiance. No leader can manage to control more than a small band of these chaotic and evil halflings, and those who show even the slightest hint of weakness or mercy are quickly cut down and devoured by the others.

Like other halflings, the Jerren live a nomadic lifestyle. They prey upon others for their food and most of their goods. The only things that the Jerren produce themselves are vile instruments of war or torture—or the poisons for which they are now infamous.

The Jerren flesheaters are the vilest of this vile race. They delight in slaughter, pain, and blood. They are experts with poison and delight in ambushing and tearing apart living things that they then devour. To prepare to become a flesheater, a Jerren most often takes levels of rogue. Occasionally Jerren fighters and barbarians become flesheaters, and the very rare Jerren ex-monk is a likely candidate as well. Since Jerren are usually chaotic, very few ever become monks. Jerren who try to study as monks often end up abandoning their contemplative training to become flesheaters. (Note that in this case, monk unarmed attack damage and Jerren flesheater tooth and claw damage do not stack in any way—simply use the better of the two.)

## Class Features

All of the following are class features of the flesheater prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Flesheaters are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with light armor, but no shields.

**Sneak Attack (Ex):** If a flesheater can catch an opponent when she is unable to defend herself effectively from his attack, he can strike a vital spot for extra damage. Basically, any time the flesheater's target would be denied her Dexterity bonus to AC (whether she actually has a Dexterity bonus or not) or when the flesheater flanks the target, the flesheater's attack deals extra damage. This ability functions exactly like the rogue's sneak attack ability.

**Tooth and Claw (Ex):** A flesheater is trained to use his nails in unarmed strikes that inflict 1d6 points of damage. At 5th level, this damage increases to 1d8 damage. At 10th level, the damage becomes 1d10.

**Flesh Grip (Ex):** If a 2nd-level flesheater makes a successful unarmed attack against a living foe, he can immediately make a grapple attack as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. (See Grapple, page 137 in the *Player's Handbook*). No initial touch attack is required. In addition, the flesheater never suffers a size penalty when making grapple checks.

**Poison Use (Ex):** At 3rd level, the flesheater learns how to use poison and never risks poisoning himself when applying poison.

**Flesh Rend (Ex):** At 4th level, if a flesheater makes a full attack and succeeds in hitting a single living foe with two unarmed attacks, he can immediately make another unarmed attack at his full attack bonus against that foe.

**Scent (Ex):** So highly trained and attuned are the senses of the flesheater that at 8th level, he can utilize the scent ability. This ability allows the flesheater to detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell. He can identify familiar odors just as others do familiar sights. See the *Monster Manual* for more details about the scent ability.

**Pounce (Ex):** A 6th level, if the flesheater charges during the first round of combat, he can make a full attack so long as he uses only unarmed attacks.

**Dark Transformation (Su):** In an unholy ritual, the 6th-level flesheater dedicates himself completely to his foul, dark gods, and in return, his body undergoes a change. The flesheaters nails now secrete poison when he makes unarmed attacks. This poison inflicts 1d2 points of Constitution damage at the time of the attack and 1 minute later. The Fortitude saving throw to resist the poison is DC 10 + the flesheater's class level.

**Swarm (Ex):** If at least three flesheaters attack a single victim, and one of them is at least 8th level, all unarmed melee attacks made by flesheaters against that foe are treated as sneak attacks (whether they are flanking or not). Further, in this situation, each flesheater gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls for every flesheater who is attacking that foe.

**Vile Damage (Su):** At 9th level, the damage inflicted by the tooth and claw ability of the flesheater (not including bonuses from strength, magic, sneak attacks, and so on) is considered vile damage and thus does not heal naturally. Vile damage can only be healed magically in an area under the effect of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell. D

HIT DIE D8

### FLESHEATER REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a flesheater, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Race:** Halfling.

**Alignment:** Chaotic evil.

**Move Silently:** 8 ranks.

**Hide:** 8 ranks.

**Feats:** Evil Brand*, Willing Deformity*, Improved Unarmed Strike.

**Special:** Flesheaters must have all of their teeth sharpened to points.

*These feats can be found in the *Book of Vile Darkness*. If you do not have this book, substitute with Endurance and Run.

### FLESHEATER CLASS SKILLS

The flesheater's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

**Str:** Climb, Jump, Swim.

**Dex:** Balance, Escape Artist, Hide, Move Silently, Tumble, Use rope.

**Con:** —

**Int:** Alchemy, Craft, Search.

**Wis:** Intuit Direction, Listen, Spot, Wilderness Lore.

**Cha:** Bluff.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

### FLESHEATER ADVANCEMENT

| Level | Attack Bonus | Fort. Save | Ref. Save | Will Save | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | +1 | +0 | +2 | +0 | Sneak attack +1d6, tooth and claw (1d4) |
| 2 | +2 | +0 | +3 | +0 | Flesh grip |
| 3 | +3 | +1 | +3 | +1 | Sneak attack +2d6, poison use |
| 4 | +4 | +1 | +4 | +1 | Flesh rend |
| 5 | +5 | +1 | +4 | +1 | Sneak attack +3d6, tooth and claw (1d6) |
| 6 | +6 | +2 | +5 | +2 | Pounce, dark transformation |
| 7 | +7 | +2 | +5 | +2 | Sneak attack +4d6 |
| 8 | +8 | +2 | +6 | +2 | Swarm, scent |
| 9 | +9 | +3 | +6 | +3 | Sneak attack +5d6, vile damage |
| 10 | +10 | +3 | +7 | +3 | Tooth and claw (1d8) |

# THE RISEN DEAD

## Four New Undead Templates:
### Mummy, Ghost Brute, Wight, and Wraith

by Wizards of the Coast R&D · illustrated by Peter Bergting

Adding a template gives a monster or character a suite of abilities its kind does not normally have. This increases the creature's Challenge Rating and provides players and characters with unexpected challenges.

As long as the DM is part of the decision to add a template to a player character, she should be ready for that character's new abilities. In fact, a player character with a template is little different from any other character, and anyone reading this is ready for the challenges they present.

Some templates can be added to monsters or characters at almost any time. Lycanthropy can afflict anyone allowed by the lycanthrope template at any point. A monster or character might become a ghost in death. A spellcaster of at least 11th level can become a lich. Those with 5 or more HD killed by vampires might become vampires. These are acquired templates. Other templates assume the creature or character was born that way. Celestial, fiendish, half-celestial, half-dragon, and half-fiend all assume the creature or character was born with the respective template. These are inherited templates. All of the templates presented in this article are acquired templates.

A character desiring an acquired template can add it when the character meets the qualifications of the template. For instance, a character can acquire the lycanthrope template when bitten by a lycanthrope. In such a case, add the template on top of class levels, monster Hit Dice, and so forth.

### Adding a Template, Step-by-Step

The process of adding a template can sometimes be confusing. Use these guidelines if you get stuck.

- If the template changes the base creature's size, use the Size Increases chart in the Introduction of the *Monster Manual* to calculate changes to natural armor, Armor Class, and attack rolls. Check the text of the template to see if you apply size modifiers to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution.
- Add all ability score modifiers from the creature size and the Abilities line from the template to the base creature's ability scores.
- When you have the new Constitution modifier and any change to Hit Die size, recalculate the templated monster's hit points.
- The new Constitution modifier also modifies the Fortitude saving throw modifier and any skill bonus for Concentration. Check for Great Fortitude or any other feat that affects the Fortitude saving throw modifier and apply them now.
- When you have the new Dexterity modifier, recalculate the Initiative bonus and Armor Class bonus. Apply modifiers for size and natural armor at this time. Check for Improved Initiative and any other feat that affects Initiative and apply them now.
- Check to see if either the base creature or the templated creature uses the Weapon Finesse feat with one or more of its attacks. If it does, use the new Dexterity modifier to recalculate the attack bonus. Apply any size modifiers at the same time.
- The new Dexterity modifier also modifies the Reflex saving throw modifier and any skills with Dexterity as a key ability. Check for Lightning Reflexes or any other feat that affects the Reflex saving throw modifier and apply them now.
- When you have the new Strength modifier, check to see if either the base creature or the templated creature uses Weapon Finesse. For all attacks that do not use Weapon Finesse, use the new Strength modifier to recalculate attack bonus. Apply any size modifiers at the same time.
- The new Strength modifier affects damage and any skills with Strength as the key ability.
- When you have the new Intelligence modifier, recalculate skill bonuses for any skills that use Intelligence as the key ability. Note that a creature does not gain new skill ranks for an increased Intelligence score unless it later gains levels.
- When you have the new Wisdom modifier, recalculate the Will saving

## PLAYTEST OPPORTUNITY

Last month in "Previews" we mentioned that the skeleton and spectral creature would be in this article. You'll find templates for the skeleton and for the zombie online at **www.wizards.com/dnd** in the "Monster Mayhem" section. Because we removed the skeleton, we imported two other familiar undead creatures as monster templates: the wraith and the wight. Unfortunately, the spectral creature seemed too similar to the abilities of these and other templates, and it was removed. The end result is that three familiar undead appear here as templates (the mummy, the wight, and the wraith) and one new undead (the ghost brute) has been included.

All of these versatile templates could appear in a future Wizards of the Coast product, so send your playtest comments about these templates and the skeleton and zombie templates to **scalemail@paizopublishing.com**. Please title your email "Risen Dead Playtest Comments." Future "Risen Dead" articles might include other undead revised as templates. Vote for the one you'd like to see most from the following list, and we'll make templates of the most popular undead. Send your votes to scalemail@paizopublishing.com with the title, "Risen Dead Vote."

Allip (*Monster Manual*)
Banedead (*Monster Compendium: Monsters of Faerûn*)
Baneguard (*Monster Compendium: Monsters of Faerûn*)
Banshee (*Monster Manual II*)
Bodak (*Monster Manual*)
Bone naga (*Monster Manual II*)
Crimson death (*Monster Manual II*)
Deathbringer (*Monster Manual II*)
Devourer (*Monster Manual*)
Dread Warrior (*Monster Compendium: Monsters of Faerûn*)
Effigy (*Monster Manual II*)
Famine spirit (*Monster Manual II*)
Ghoul (*Monster Manual*)
Ghast (*Monster Manual*)
Gravecrawler (*Monster Manual II*)
Jahi (*Monster Manual II*)
Morgh (*Monster Manual*)
Ragewind (*Monster Manual II*)
Shadow (*Monster Manual*)
Son of Kyuss (*Monster Manual II*)
Zombie, Tyrantfog (*Monster Compendium: Monsters of Faerûn*)
New undead

throw modifiers and the skill bonuses for any skills that use Wisdom as the key ability. Check for Iron Will or any other feat that affects the Will saving throw modifier and apply them now.

• For all special abilities of the base creature that remain, recalculate saving throw DCs (special abilities from the template tell you how to calculate their DC). The formula for most save DCs is 10 + 1/2 the creature's Hit Dice + the relevant ability score modifier from the creature using the attack. The relevant abilities are:

**Strength:** Any application of force, crushing, binding, or constriction.

**Dexterity:** Movement, movement restrictions, hitting with a missile, entanglement, webs.

**Constitution:** Almost anything that comes from the creature's body; poison, breath weapons.

**Intelligence:** Illusion effects.

**Wisdom:** Mental or perception effects (except charms and compulsions, see Charisma).

**Charisma:** The creature's Charisma modifier affects the save DC for any spell-like abilities it has. Use Charisma for anything pitting the creature's will against an opponent: fear, gaze attacks, charms, compulsions, and energy drain. Also use Charisma for any DC that normally would be based on an ability score the creature does not have. For example, undead creatures have no Constitution scores, so any poison attacks they have would use Charisma to determine DC. Always use Charisma for spell-like abilities.

• Add any new special abilities granted by the template.

• Add any skill bonuses given by the template.

• Add any feats given by the template not already taken into account.

• Update the Challenge Rating as instructed by the template.

## MUMMIFIED CREATURES

Mummies are undead creatures, embalmed using ancient necromantic lore. Often set as guardians for sacred sites, mummies defend their charges until destroyed. Should they be unable to defend their charge for any reason, they become unreasoning spirits of vengeance, hunting those who desecrated the site their masters set the mummies to defend.

Mummies appear withered and desiccated, with features hidden beneath centuries-old funereal wrappings. They move with a slow, shambling gait and groan with the weight of the ages. Symbols of the dire gods they serve often mark these horrid creatures. While other undead stink of carrion, the herbs and powders used to create a mummy give off a sharp, pungent odor like that of a spice cabinet.

Mummified creatures speak the languages they spoke in life.

### Creating a Mummy

"Mummified" is a template that can be added to any corporeal creature except constructs, oozes, and undead (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). Creatures with this template have their type changed to "undead." It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Hit Dice:** Change to d12

**Speed:** -10 ft. (minimum 10 ft.), with other movement types unchanged.

**AC:** The base creature's natural armor increases by +8.

**Damage:** The base creature's natural attacks inflict mummy rot in addition to their normal damage. The base creature's natural and manufactured weapons deal damage normally. If the base creature does not have a better natural attack, it gains a slam attack that deals damage based on the creature's size:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Fine:* | 1 |
| *Diminutive:* | 1d2 |
| *Tiny:* | 1d3 |
| *Small:* | 1d4 |
| *Medium-size:* | 1d6 |
| *Large:* | 1d8 |
| *Huge:* | 2d6 |
| *Gargantuan:* | 2d8 |
| *Colossal:* | 4d6 |

**Special Attacks:** A mummy retains all the base creature's special attacks and gains those listed below. Saves for abilities listed below have a DC of 10 + 1/2 the mummy's HD + the mummy's Charisma modifier unless noted otherwise.

*Despair (Su):* At the mere sight of a mummy, the viewer must succeed at a Will save or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by that mummy's despair ability for one day.

*Mummy Rot (Su):* Supernatural disease—natural weapon, Fortitude save (DC 20), incubation period 1 day; damage 1d6 temporary Constitution. Unlike normal

diseases, mummy rot continues until the victim reaches Constitution 0 (and dies) or receives a *remove disease* spell or similar magic (see Disease, Chapter 3: Running the Game, in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

An afflicted creature that dies shrivels away into sand and dust that blow away into nothing at the first wind unless both a *remove disease* and *raise dead* are cast on the remains within 6 rounds.

**Special Qualities:** A mummy retains all the base creature's special qualities and gains those listed below.

*Fire Vulnerability (Ex):* A mummy takes double damage from fire attacks unless a save is allowed for half damage. A successful save halves the damage and a failure doubles it.

*Damage Reduction (Su):* A mummy's undead body is tough, giving the creature damage reduction 5/+1.

*Resistant to Blows (Ex):* Physical attacks deal only half damage to mummies. Apply this effect before damage reduction.

*Undead:* Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

**Saves:** Same as the base creature

**Abilities:** Increase from base creature as follows: +6 Strength, -2 Dexterity, -4 Intelligence (minimum 2), +4 Wisdom, and +4 Charisma. Being undead, a mummy has no Constitution score.

**Skills:** Same as the base creature

**Feats:** Same as the base creature

**Climate/Terrain:** Any

**Organization:** Solitary, wardens (2-4), or guardians (6-10)

**Challenge Rating:** Same as the base creature +2

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always lawful evil

**Advancement:** Same as the base creature

**ECL:** +4

## Sample Mummy

This example uses an ogre as the base creature.

**Ogre Mummy**
**Large Undead**
**Hit Dice:** 4d12 (26 hp)
**Initiative:** -2 (Dex)
**Speed:** 20 ft.
**AC:** 20 (-1 size, -2 Dex, +13 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 20
**Attacks:** Slam +11 melee; Huge greatclub +12 melee
**Damage:** Slam 1d8+12 and mummy rot; Huge greatclub 2d6+12
**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.
**Special Attacks:** Despair, mummy rot
**Special Qualities:** Undead, damage reduction 5/+1, resistant to blows, fire vulnerability
**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref -1, Will +3
**Abilities:** Str 27, Dex 6, Con —, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 11
**Skills:** Climb +10, Listen +4, Spot +4
**Feats:** Weapon Focus (greatclub)

**Climate/Terrain:** Any
**Organization:** Solitary, wardens (2-4), or guardians (6-10)
**Challenge Rating:** 4
**Treasure:** Standard
**Alignment:** Always lawful evil
**Advancement:** By character class

### Combat

In melee combat, an ogre mummy delivers a powerful blow. Even if it had no other abilities, its great Strength and grim determination would make it a formidable opponent.

**Despair (Su):** At the mere sight of an ogre mummy, the viewer must succeed at a Will save (DC 11) or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, the creature cannot be affected again by that mummified ogre's despair ability for one day.

**Fire Vulnerability (Ex):** An ogre mummy takes double damage from fire attacks unless a save is allowed for half damage. A successful save halves the damage and a failure doubles it.

**Mummy Rot (Su):** Supernatural disease—natural weapon, Fortitude save (DC 20), incubation period 1 day; damage 1d6 temporary Constitution. Unlike normal diseases, mummy rot continues until the victim reaches Constitution 0 (and dies) or receives a *remove disease* spell or similar magic (see Disease, Chapter 3: Running the Game, in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

An afflicted creature that dies shrivels away into sand and dust that blow away into nothing at the first wind unless both a *remove disease* and *raise dead* spell are cast on the remains within 6 rounds.

**Resistant to Blows (Ex):** Physical attacks deal only half damage to ogre mummies. Apply this effect before damage reduction.

**Undead:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

## FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

The templates for the wraith, wight, and mummy were designed to mimic the abilities of the undead creatures from the *Monster Manual* as closely as possible while allowing DMs to apply the template to the broadest number of creatures. Astute players will notice that the abilities of the ogre mummy are very similar to those of a normal mummy, but you can still introduce these templates and the ghost brute template to your game in a number of surprising ways:

- Apply one of the templates to an individual villain or several of the same type of creature in a single encounter. Introducing the template slowly like this makes it appear as though there are many new monsters the PCs have to face and can help make your encounters feel more unique.
- Design an adventure in which most of the creatures have one of the templates applied to them. The ghost brute forest where most of the creatures don't realize they are undead is a good example, but you could also have the PCs delve into a tomb where a great king was mummified along with all his servants—pets, guards, generals, advisors, and all. Using the template in this fashion allows you to add variety by changing the base creature, and it can make for a memorable adventure.
- The templates presented in this article and on www.wizards.com expand and change what undead are like in your game. Perhaps the nature of Necromancy and the undead could be changing in your campaign world. Some catalyst event or powerful artifact could be causing the power of Necromancy to grow, or perhaps the Negative Energy Plane is drawing nearer and becoming a transitive plane with the Prime Material like the Plane of Shadow, causing more creatures to become undead and fundamentally altering your world—unless the PCs do something to stop it. . . .

## FOR YOUR CHARACTER

It's often difficult for player characters to use templates, but a little creativity and some leeway from your DM can go a long way in making your character more unique and more fun to play:

- The *create undead* spell and the *create greater undead* spell become much more powerful if your DM allows spellcasters to create undead creatures using the templates. For instance, making a mummy beholder is much more valuable to the spellcaster than making a standard mummy. Suggest this solution to your DM: The spells can be used to create undead via the templates only if the base creature it would be used upon has a CR low enough that the CR adjustment makes the final creature have a CR equal to or less than the standard monster. Then both your character and your DM can use the spells to create many different kinds of interesting undead.
- The templates presented in this article provide ECLs for applying the template to characters. Consult your DM and see if you might be able to play a character with one of these templates applied. Perhaps your character who was killed by a wight could regain her old personality and alignment once the wight who controlled her is killed. Instead of raising or resurrecting your character when she dies, you could bring back an old character who died before you started playing your current character; now an undead creature, this old character sought out his companions from life to continue the quest he left unfulfilled. If your character is a cleric who rebukes undead or a necromancer, your DM might allow you to take a creature from one of these templates as a cohort or hireling.
- One of these templates could provide great roleplaying opportunities for you. Your DM might have a close associate of your character become a wight or wraith. This newly evil creature remembers your character and all the trappings of its life, making it a bizarrely sympathetic villain. Perhaps it isn't evil at all, but horrified by its new condition, your friend or family member will gradually descend into madness and evil if you don't intervene.

## GHOST BRUTE

Ghost brutes are the spectral remnants of creatures without the sense of self needed to become normal ghosts. They drift aimlessly, haunting the places where they died and moaning in endless misery.

Ghost brutes are often associated with a true ghost. A ghost brute might be the mount of a betrayed paladin, the beloved pet of a child tragically killed, the scorched oak of a ghostly dryad, or a murdered druid's animal companion. Generally, laying the associated being to rest also puts an end to the ghost brute.

Sometimes, however, a bizarre circumstance might produce a ghost brute without a companion. For example, a forest suddenly obliterated by a fell magical attack might remain as a ghostly grove populated by lingering spiritsnot even completely aware of their own destruction.

### Creating a Ghost Brute

"Ghost brute" is a template that can be added to any corporeal creature with a Charisma score of less than 8 (hereafter referred to as the "base creature") except constructs, oozes, and undead. The creature's type changes to "undead," and it gains the "incorporeal" subtype. It follows the rules for ghosts (see Appendix 3 in the *Monster Manual*) except as noted here.

**Attacks:** The creature retains all its natural attacks, but the attacks become incorporeal touch attacks.

**Damage:** Against ethereal creatures, a ghost brute uses the base creature's damage ratings. Against nonethereal creatures, the ghost brute cannot normally deal damage but can use its supernatural abilities (such as corrupting touch) when manifested.

**Special Attacks:** A ghost brute retains all the special attacks of the base creature, although those relying on physical contact do not affect nonethereal creatures. The ghost brute also gains the manifestation ability plus one other special attack selected from the list below. Saves have a DC of 10 + 1/2 the ghost brute's HD + the ghost brute's Charisma modifier unless noted otherwise.

*Bloodcurdling Howl (Su):* The mournful howling of a ghost brute chills the living to the core. It can howl as a standard action. All living creatures within a 300-foot radius spread must succeed at a Will save or become shaken for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic, necromantic, mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the bloodcurdling howl cannot be affected by the same ghost brute's howl for one day.

*Corrupting Touch (Su):* A ghost brute that hits a living target with its incorporeal touch attack deals damage based on its size, adding its Dexterity modifier to attack rolls.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Fine:* | 1d2 |
| *Diminutive:* | 1d3 |
| *Tiny:* | 1d4 |
| *Small:* | 1d6 |
| *Medium-size:* | 1d8 |
| *Large:* | 2d6 |
| *Huge:* | 2d8 |
| *Gargantuan:* | 4d6 |
| *Colossal:* | 4d8 |

*Manifestation (Su):* All ghost brutes have this ability. As ethereal creatures, they cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When they manifest, ghost brutes become visible but remain incorporeal. However, a manifested ghost brute can strike with incorporeal touch attacks (if it has them) or a ghost touch weapon (if it can wield a weapon). A manifested ghost brute remains on the Ethereal Plane but can be attacked by opponents on both the Material and Ethereal Planes. See the ghost template for more details.

**Special Qualities:** A ghost brute retains all the special qualities of the base creature and gains those listed below.

*Incorporeal:* When a ghost brute manifests, it is incorporeal. See the *Monster Manual* for a description of this subtype.

*Loom (Su):* A ghost brute can increase its size by up to two size categories. It can use this ability for 10 rounds plus its Charisma bonus each day, which need not be consecutive.

Use the Size Increases chart in the Introduction of the *Monster Manual* to calculate changes to natural armor, Armor Class, attack rolls, Strength, and Dexterity. Note that this also changes the damage the ghost brute can deal with its corrupting touch. A ghost brute cannot make itself larger than Colossal size, but Colossal and Gargantuan ghost brutes that use the loom ability deal 4d10 points of damage with their corrupting touch attacks. In addition, any living creature within 30 feet of a looming ghost brute when it makes a bloodcurdling howl must save against the bloodcurdling howl's effects with a -2 morale penalty, becoming frightened for

2d4 rounds and shaken for 2d4 rounds after that.

*Rejuvenation (Su):* In most cases, it is difficult to destroy a ghost brute through simple combat. The "destroyed" spirit often restores itself in 2d4 days. A ghost brute that would otherwise be destroyed returns to its old haunts with a successful level check (1d20 + ghost brute's HD) against a DC of 16. As a rule, the only way to get rid of a ghost brute for sure is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting in peace. The exact means varies with each spirit and might require a good deal of research.

A ghost brute is tied more closely to other beings than more intelligent spirits. Often it is the companion of a ghostly being, but it may also become fascinated with or enraged by a living creature that intrudes on its domain. It always returns to the object of its attachment rather than to a set location.

*Turn Resistance (Ex):* A ghost brute has +2 turn resistance.

*Undead:* Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

**Saves:** Same as the base creature

**Abilities:** Same as the base creature, except that the ghost brute has no Constitution score, and its Charisma score increases by +8.

**Feats:** Same as base creature

**Climate/Terrain:** Any

**Organization:** Solitary or with associated ghost, or same as the base creature

**Challenge Rating:** Same as the base creature +2

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Often neutral

**Advancement:** Same as the base creature

**ECL:** +5

### Sample Ghost Brute

This example uses a cat as the base creature.

**Ghost Brute Cat**
**Tiny Undead (Incorporeal)**
**Hit Dice:** 1/2d12 (3 hp)
**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)
**Speed:** Fly 30 ft. (perfect)
**Armor Class:** 16 (+2 size, +2 Dex, +2 deflection) touch 16, flat-footed 14; or 14 (+2 size, +2 Dex)
**Attacks:** 2 incorporeal claws +4 melee, incorporeal bite -1 melee; or 2 claws +4 melee, bite -1 melee
**Damage:** Claw 1d4, bite 1d4; or claw 1d4-2, bite 1d3-4
**Face/Reach:** 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.
**Special Attacks:** Bloodcurdling howl, corrupting touch, manifestation
**Special Qualities:** Loom, rejuvenation, +2 turn resistance
**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1
**Abilities:** Str 3, Dex 15, Con —, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 15
**Skills:** Balance +10, Climb +5, Hide +17*, Listen +5, Move Silently +9, Spot +5

**Climate/Terrain:** Any
**Organization:** Solitary
**Challenge Rating:** 2
**Treasure:** None
**Alignment:** Always neutral
**Advancement:** —

#### Combat

Like other ghost brutes, the ghost brute cat follows the lead of its companion.

**Bloodcurdling Howl (Su):** The mournful yowling of a ghost brute cat chills the living to the core. It can howl as a standard action. All living creatures within a 300-foot radius spread must succeed at a Will save or become shaken for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic, necromantic, mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the bloodcurdling howl cannot be affected by the ghost brute cat's howl for one day.

**Corrupting Touch (Su):** A ghost brute cat that hits a living target with its incorporeal touch attack deals 1d4 points of damage.

**Incorporeal:** When the ghost brute cat manifests, it is incorporeal. See the *Monster Manual* for a description of this subtype.

**Loom (Su):** A ghost brute cat can increase its size up to Medium-size. It can use this ability for 12 rounds each day, which need not be consecutive.

Use the Size Increases chart in the Introduction of the *Monster Manual* to calculate changes to natural armor, Armor Class, attack rolls, Strength, and Dexterity. This also changes the damage the ghost brute cat can deal with its corrupting touch. In addition, any living creature within 30 feet of a looming ghost brute cat when it makes a bloodcurdling howl must save against the bloodcurdling howl's effects with a -2 morale penalty, becoming frightened for 2d4 rounds and shaken for 2d4 rounds after that.

**Manifestation (Su):** As an ethereal creature, the ghost brute cat cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When it manifests, the ghost brute cat becomes visible but remains incorporeal. However, a manifested ghost brute cat can strike with incorporeal touch attacks. A manifested ghost brute cat remains on the Ethereal Plane but can be attacked by opponents on both the Material and Ethereal Planes. See the ghost brute template for more details.

**Rejuvenation (Su):** It is difficult to destroy a ghost brute through simple combat. The "destroyed" spirit often restores itself in 2d4 days. A ghost brute cat that would otherwise be destroyed returns to its old haunts with a successful level check (1d20 + ghost brute's HD) against a DC of 16. The only way to get rid of a ghost brute cat for sure is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting in peace. The exact means varies with each spirit and might require a good deal of research.

A ghost brute cat is tied more closely to other beings than more intelligent spirits. Often it is the companion of a ghostly being, but it may also become fascinated with or enraged by a living creature that intrudes on its domain. It always returns to the object of its attachment rather than to a set location.

**Turn Resistance (Ex):** A ghost brute cat has +2 turn resistance.

**Undead:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

**Skills:** Ghost brute cats receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks and a +8 racial bonus to Balance checks. They use their Dexterity modifiers for Climb checks. *In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the ghost brute cat's Hide bonus increases to +8.

## WIGHT

A wight's appearance is a weird and

twisted reflection of the form it had in life. Its wild, frantic eyes burn with malevolence. Its leathery, desiccated flesh is drawn tight across its bones, and its teeth have grown into sharp, jagged needles.

Wights lurk in barrow-mounds, catacombs, and other places thick with the aura of death, where they nurture their hatred. They seek to destroy all life, filling graveyards with their victims and populating the world with their horrid progeny.

## Creating a Wight

"Wight" is a template that can be added to any corporeal creature except constructs, oozes, and undead (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). Creatures with this template have their type changed to "undead." It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Hit Dice:** Change to d12

**AC:** The base creature's natural armor increases by +4.

**Damage:** The base creature's natural and manufactured weapons deal damage normally. In addition, one of the base creature's natural attacks now causes energy drain. If the base creature does not have a better natural attack, it gains a slam attack that deals damage based on the creature's size:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Fine:* | 1 |
| *Diminutive:* | 1 |
| *Tiny:* | 1d2 |
| *Small:* | 1d3 |
| *Medium-size:* | 1d4 |
| *Large:* | 1d6 |
| *Huge:* | 1d8 |
| *Gargantuan:* | 2d6 |
| *Colossal:* | 2d8 |

**Special Attacks:** A wight retains the base creature's special attacks and gains those listed below. Saves have a DC of 10 +1/2 the wight's HD + the wight's Charisma modifier unless noted otherwise.

*Energy Drain (Su):* Living creatures hit by the wight's level-draining natural attack receive 1 negative level. Determine the Fortitude save to remove the negative levels as stated above.

*Create Spawn (Su):* Any humanoid slain by a wight's energy drain becomes a wight within 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the wight that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They gain the wight template.

**Special Qualities:** A wight retains all the base creature's special qualities and gains those listed below.

*Undead:* Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

**Saves:** Same as the base creature

**Abilities:** Increase from base creature as follows: +2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, and +4 Charisma. Being undead, a wight has no Constitution score.

**Skills:** Same as the base creature

**Feats:** Same as the base creature

**Climate/Terrain:** Any

**Organization:** Solitary, gang (2-5), or pack (6-11)

**Challenge Rating:** Same as the base creature +2

**Treasure:** Same as base creature

**Alignment:** Usually lawful evil

**Advancement:** Same as base creature

**ECL:** +4

## Sample Wight

This example uses a troglodyte as the base creature.

**Troglodyte Wight**
**Medium-Size Undead**
**Hit Dice:** 2d12 (13 hp)
**Initiative:** +0
**Speed:** 30 ft.
**AC:** 20 (+10 natural)
**Attacks:** Longspear +2 melee (or 2 claws +2 melee), bite +0 melee; or javelin +2 ranged
**Damage:** Longspear 1d8+1, bite 1d4 and energy drain, claw 1d4+1; or javelin 1d6+1
**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with longspear)
**Special Attacks:** Energy drain, stench
**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 90 ft., undead
**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +2
**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 11, Con —, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 14
**Skills:** Hide +7*, Listen +4
**Feats:** Multiattack, Weapon Focus (javelin)

**Climate/Terrain:** Any
**Organization:** Solitary, gang (2-5), or pack (6-11)
**Challenge Rating:** 3
**Treasure:** 50% coins; 50% goods; 50% items
**Alignment:** Usually chaotic evil
**Advancement:** By character class

### Combat

Like other wights, troglodyte wights are straightforward yet deadly in combat.

**Stench (Ex):** When a troglodyte wight is angry or frightened, it secretes an oily, musklike chemical that nearly every form of animal life finds offensive. All living creatures (except troglodytes and troglodyte wights) within 30 feet of the troglodyte must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 13) or be overcome with nausea. This lasts for 10 rounds and deals 1d6 points of temporary Strength damage.

**Energy Drain (Su):** Living creatures hit by a troglodyte wight's bite receive one negative level. The Fortitude save to remove a negative level is DC 13.

**Create Spawn (Su):** Any humanoid slain by a troglodyte wight's energy drain becomes a wight within 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the troglodyte wight that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They gain the wight template.

**Undead:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

**Skills:** The skin of a troglodyte wight changes color somewhat, allowing it to blend in with surroundings like a chameleon and conferring a +4 racial bonus to Hide checks. *In rocky or subterranean settings, this bonus improves to +8.

## Wraiths

Wraiths are incorporeal creatures born of evil and darkness. They despise all living things. Although composed of darkness, wraiths are more or less humanoid in shape. They are utterly featureless except for the glowing red pinpoints of their eyes. In some cases, the grim silhouette of a wraith might appear armored or outfitted with weapons. This does not affect the creature's Armor Class or combat abilities but only reflects the shape it had in life.

## Creating a Wraith

"Wraith" is a template that can be added to any corporeal creature except constructs, oozes, and undead (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). Creatures with this template have their type changed to "undead." It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Hit Dice:** Change to d12

**Initiative:** Wraiths have Improved Initiative as a racial bonus feat, otherwise same as the base creature.

**Speed:** Wraiths have a fly speed of 60 feet, unless the base creature has a higher fly speed, with perfect maneuverability. It loses all other movement types.

**AC:** The creature loses all natural armor, but gains a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma bonus or +1, whichever is greater.

**Attacks:** The creature retains all its natural attacks, but the attacks become incorporeal touch attacks.

**Damage:** The wraith's incorporeal touch attacks deal damage based on size. In addition, one of the base creature's natural attacks now deals 1d6 Constitution drain.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Fine:* | 1 |
| *Diminutive:* | 1 |
| *Tiny:* | 1d2 |
| *Small:* | 1d3 |
| *Medium-size:* | 1d4 |
| *Large:* | 1d6 |
| *Huge:* | 1d8 |
| *Gargantuan:* | 2d6 |
| *Colossal:* | 2d8 |

**Special Attacks:** A wraith retains the base creature's special attacks and gains those listed below. Saves have a DC of 10 +1/2 the wraith's HD + the wraith's Charisma modifier unless noted otherwise.

*Constitution Drain (Su):* Living creatures hit by a wraith's Constitution-draining incorporeal touch attack must succeed at a Fortitude save or suffer 1d6 points of Constitution drain.

*Create Spawn (Su):* Any humanoid slain by a wraith's Constitution drain becomes a wraith in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the wraith that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They gain the wraith template.

**Special Qualities:** A wraith retains all the base creature's special qualities and gains those listed below.

*Daylight Powerlessness (Ex):* Wraiths are utterly powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flee from it. A wraith caught in sunlight cannot attack and can take only partial actions.

*Incorporeal:* Can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, or magic, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. Can pass through solid objects at will, and own attacks pass through armor. Always moves silently.

*Undead:* Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

*Unnatural Aura (Su):* Both wild and domesticated animals can sense the unnatural presence of a wraith at a distance of 30 feet. They do not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

**Saves:** Same as the base creature

**Abilities:** Increase from base creature as follows: +6 Dexterity, +4 Intelligence, +4 Wisdom, and +4 Charisma. A wraith has no Strength score. Being undead, a Wraith has no Constitution score.

**Skills:** Same as the base creature

**Feats:** Wraiths have Improved Initiative as a racial bonus feat, otherwise same as the base creature.

**Climate/Terrain:** Any

**Organization:** Solitary, gang (2-5), or pack (6-11)

**Challenge Rating:** Same as the base creature +3

**Treasure:** Same as the base creature

**Alignment:** Always lawful evil

**Advancement:** Same as the base creature

**ECL:** +6

## Sample Wraith

This example uses a merfolk as the base creature.

**Merfolk Wraith**
**Medium-Size Undead**
**Hit Dice:** 1d12 (6 hp)
**Initiative:** +8 (Dexterity, Improved Initiative)
**Speed:** 60 ft. (perfect)
**AC:** 17 (+4 Dexterity, +3 deflection)
**Attacks:** Incorporeal touch +1 melee
**Damage:** Incorporeal touch 1d4 and 1d6 Constitution drain
**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks:** Constitution drain, create spawn
**Special Qualities:** Daylight powerlessness, incorporeal, low-light vision, undead, unnatural aura
**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2
**Abilities:** Str –, Dex 18, Con –, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 17
**Skills:** Listen +6, Spot +6
**Feats:** Alertness, Improved Initiative

**Climate/Terrain:** Any
**Organization:** Solitary, gang (2-5), or pack (6-11)
**Challenge Rating:** 3
**Treasure:** Standard
**Alignment:** Usually neutral evil
**Advancement:** By character class

### Combat

Merfolk wraiths seldom leave their aquatic haunts.

**Constitution Drain (Su):** Living creatures hit by a merfolk wraith's incorporeal touch attack must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 13) or suffer 1d6 points of Constitution drain.

**Create Spawn (Su):** Any humanoid slain by a merfolk wraith's Constitution drain becomes a wraith in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the merfolk wraith that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They gain the wraith template.

**Daylight Powerlessness (Ex):** Merfolk wraiths are utterly powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flee from it. A merfolk wraith caught in sunlight cannot attack and can take only partial actions.

**Incorporeal:** Wraiths are incorporeal. See the *Monster Manual* for a description of this subtype.

**Unnatural Aura (Su):** Both wild and domesticated animals can sense the unnatural presence of a merfolk wraith at a distance of 30 feet. They will not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

**Undead:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

# Shrouded in DEATH

## The Ecology of the Mummy

by Terry Edwards · illustrated by Wayne Reynolds

*They were the stuff of legend in lands half a world away. It was unheard of that a mummy should exist in the tropical southern continent, but there I was in the cavern tombs of the Mazteceta, frozen in fear as the undead monster pounded the life from my companions. At the time I didn't realize that the creature, with painted black skin stretched over clay molded in the shape of a man, was a mummy. When my wits were about me, I fled the cavern alongside the guide who had led our company to the tombs. He was injured, struck by the mummy, but nothing beyond my ability to heal, or so I thought. Within two days, the young man turned to dust before my eyes, cursed by the ancient guardian of an extinct civilization.*

*Years later I would return with the knowledge and power to master the monster. It now stands on display among my own creations and mummies collected from around the world.*

—Uleram Zhehad, Author of *You Live Again, Forever*

### Ecological Notes

Mummification is the state of a corpse in which bacteria and fungi are unable to grow and cause decay. This preserved state can occur naturally in the proper conditions or can be imposed upon a corpse artificially. Whether a mummy is created by natural or artificial means, there are only two ways to animate it into as undead: an act of the gods or a *create greater undead* spell.

Three natural settings consistently mummify a corpse given enough time. The hot climate and salty sand of the desert are ideal conditions to preserve a corpse. Buried in the sand, a corpse loses all moisture in a matter of weeks. Another ideal condition combines the freezing temperature and dry winds found in many glacial and mountain regions. The bitter cold prevents decay as the dry wind slowly dehydrates the corpse, leaving a "freeze-dried" mummy. A corpse can be frozen without being dehydrated, but a mummy created in such a fashion is subject to decay if temperatures rise above freezing. One last natural mummy type that bears mention is the bog mummy. Peat bogs, found in most temperate coastal regions, are ideal for mummy creation. Peat bogs are highly acidic beds of decaying moss. A corpse left in the cold, wet peat is preserved as its muscle dissolves and its skin cures to a leathery texture. Buried in the acidic peat, the bones of a corpse lose calcium, leaving them spongy; the result is often a deformed mummy.

Many methods have been established to preserve the dead. The best known of these comes from an ancient desert civilization. Following the guidelines perfected over millennia, the first step in creation is to wash the corpse in palm wine, although any disinfecting alcohol suffices. The brain and internal organs of the corpse are then removed, leaving only the heart, which is said to be a vital organ for rebirth of the body. Canopic jars are used to store the preserved organs, one jar each for liver, lungs, stomach, and intestines. It is believed that each jar represents a different god, and they are faced in one of the four cardinal directions. Some sages claim these jars store an animated mummy's life force much like a lich's phylactery. This is a misconception that has cost many a tomb robber his life.

After removing the organs, the skull is rinsed with palm wine and the abdominal cavity is stuffed with bags of incense and spices. Salt is then packed around the body to dehydrate the corpse (an average human corpse requires 400 pounds of salt to dehydrate). The corpse is left in a hot, dry room until mummified, a process that generally takes 35 days. According to the ancient method, the mummy is rubbed with frankincense and myrrh and wrapped with strips of linen held in place with a liquid resin. These linens are often inscribed with spells to protect the mummy in the afterlife. Gold caps on the fingers and toes are the finishing touches prior to the rituals and spells allowing the mummy to live again.

Clay mummies predate even the earliest wrapped mummies, and their creation process is very different. For this type of mummy, the skin is carefully removed from the mummy to be used later, and the internal tissues (fat, muscle, organs) are discarded. After being stripped of all flesh, the skeleton is meticulously cleaned and then reassembled with support sticks

THE SKULL: the brain is removed through the nasal passage and the skull rinsed with palm wine.



After dehydration of the body, the skin is rubbed with frankincense and myrhh. Spells (in the form of scrolls) are often inscribed on the mummy's wrappings.



ABDOMINAL CAVITY: All internal organs are removed except the heart. The chest and abdominal cavity are then stuffed with bags of herbs and incense.



ORGAN JARS: Canopic jars are used to store the preserved organs. Unlike a lich's phylactery, these jars give the posessor no ability to harm the mummy.

tied to the bones where needed. Reeds are stuffed into the skull, and clay is molded around the skeleton to replace lost tissues. Skin is then reapplied over the clay and painted black with a water-resistant pigment.

These are just two examples of preparing a corpse for animation as a mummy. As long as the basic elements of preservation are present, a mummy can be made. For instance, in a tropical climate, one could wrap special plants around the corpse to dehydrate and cure it. Smoking a corpse could be another way to preserve the dead for animation as a mummy. In a futuristic campaign, a corpse could be soaked in a formaldehyde-like concoction, preserving the corpse with a more life-like appearance.

Mummies are most often found in ancient ruins, the strongholds of powerful clerics, and areas conducive to natural mummification. When created, mummies serve primarily as guardians of tombs, temples, and other important religious sites. Natural mummies tend to wander aimlessly, destroying all life that crosses their path. Most mummies do not actively collect treasure, but their lairs might accumulate treasure left by slain intruders. Ancient cultures often entombed their dead with treasures collected throughout the deceased's life, believing that you could take your belongings with you into the afterlife. Depending on the wealth the mummy possessed in life, tomb robbing could be a very profitable endeavor.

## Society Notes

Mummies usually have a close spiritual connection to the people who created them. Many cultures mummified their dead to protect the deceased's spirit in the afterlife. Others placed the mummies of family members in the home so that they could be together forever. In all cases, the mummy is a link between the living and the dead.

In cultures that mummify their dead, an animated mummy might be venerated as a living god. In this case, the mummy could be housed in a temple and placated with offerings and sacrifices. The mummy would likely be very important to its people, representing the vengeful wrath of the gods when worshipers were unable to please it or serving as a protector of the village in times of attack.

To appease the gods, some cultures resort to human sacrifice, either leaving the exposed corpse of the unfortunate victim on a frozen mountain peak or submerging it in a swamp. These sites become important religious locations, oracles where those in need can breech the veil between worlds and petition the dead. The dead are mummies animated by the god to whom they were sacrificed, serving the living as ancestral advisors or in other ways as the deity decrees.

A mummy's relationship with humanoids is dependent upon how the humanoids view death or the undead. Creatures without negative cultural views of the undead generally find the mummies beneficial to their existence.

## Killer Creature Combos

Mummies are known to associate or share lairs with many different creatures, both living and nonliving.

**Mummy and Will-O'-Wisp:** Bog mummies are prized companions to the swamp-dwelling will-o'-wisp. When seen at a distance, this pair looks like a lantern-bearing traveler having difficulty navigating the swamp. The will-o'-wisp can even call out to potential victims to lure them closer. By the time their victims are near enough to discern their real appearance, the will-o'-wisp is feeding on the emotions of those who have succumbed to the mummy's despair ability. While the mummy engages combatants, the will-o'-wisp can appear where most needed to deliver its shock attack.

A single will-o'-wisp and one mummy is an EL 6 encounter.

**Mummy and Mimic:** Mummy tombs are often stuffed with treasures, offerings, statues, and sarcophagi. Mimics are sometimes sealed in tombs to protect the deceased's wealth from grave robbers. A mimic hidden among the tomb's contents is almost impossible to spot until it is too late. A foe paralyzed by the mummy's despair ability is easy prey for the mimic's grapple, and a grappled opponent is an easy target for the mummy's slam attack.

A single mummy and two mimics is an EL 8 encounter.

**Mummy and Brown Mold:** Brown mold is often found growing abundantly in a mummy's lair. A mummy is immune to the mold's cold subdual damage, and when PCs employ fire against the mummy, the mold doubles in size.

Two mummies and a patch of brown mold is an EL 6 encounter.

**Mummy and Zombie:** Other undead are immune to the mummy's despair ability, which is essential if one plans to share space with them. While the abilities of these monsters don't make for a fantastic combination, the strength of pairing these two undead lies in deception. With a little work prior to animating the zombies, their creator can disguise them as mummies. A zombie corpse can undergo the same mummification process as a true mummy and then simply be animated as a zombie instead of being the recipient of a *create greater undead* spell. With any luck, the deception will lure PCs into using unnecessary resources they would never waste on foes as weak as zombies.

A single mummy and two zombies is an EL 4 encounter.

## Vs. PCs

The information below describes how best to use a mummy's abilities and is intended to help a DM run a mummy NPC. Players should skip this section and instead read the Vs. Mummies section later in this article for information on battling mummies.

**Despair, Use It or Lose It:** A mummy's despair ability can only affect a given creature once per day and only for 1d4 rounds. To put this ability to its best use, make sure the mummy is in melee with the PCs when they first see it. If any of the PCs are paralyzed with fear, the mummy should move in for a coup de grace, even if it must risk attacks from other foes to do so.

**Trigger Your Traps:** A crafty rogue can all too often find and disable the traps that litter a mummy's lair. The best way to prevent this is to have the mummy set off the traps. A mummy is completely unaffected by poison gas and takes little to no damage from most other traps after factoring in its resistance to blows and damage reduction.

**No Holds Barred:** If a particular PC is giving the mummy trouble, start a grapple. If successful, the mummy will still be able to deal damage with its slam attack, but the grappled PC will be forced to break the grapple or use a light weapon. Grappling also places severe restrictions on what spells a PC can cast and requires the caster to make a Concentration check. The loss of the mummy's Dexterity bonus to AC while

grappling is inconsequential since the mummy has no bonus.

**A Helping (Magical) Hand:** Generally used as guardians of tombs or treasures, a mummy's creator usually invests a little time crafting traps and casting spells to aid his undead sentinel. Magic traps such as *glyph of warding, greater glyph of warding,* and *symbol* are favorites of the evil clerics who animate mummies. Common choices for glyphs include *bane, circle of doom, desecrate,* and *doom.* For areas that are maintained, *unhallow* is a very effective spell, and if *protection from elements (fire)* is the spell effect tied to the site, the mummy's biggest weakness is practically eliminated.

**Tactics:** If possible, initiate combat when the mummy is in melee range of the PCs. The mummy's slow movement and lack of a ranged attack leave it vulnerable if spotted at a distance. Spellcasters are the biggest threat, so charge the cleric, sorcerer, or wizard, overrunning other PCs if necessary.

## Vs. Mummies

If your party runs into a mummy, don't despair—there's plenty you can do to overcome a mummy's abilities.

**Do Not Despair:** If the party fails to overcome a mummy's despair ability, the resulting paralysis could give the mummy enough time to pound them into dust. A paladin's aura of courage is the best defense against despair. Paladins of at least 2nd level are immune to fear effects and grant all who remain within 10 feet of them a +4 morale bonus to their saving throws against fear effects. If you have no paladin in your group, you can still bolster Will saves with spells or bardic music. *Bless, protection from evil, remove fear,* and *aid* all improve saves against fear effects. If a party member has already succumbed to despair, the *remove fear* spell allows a new saving throw with a +4 morale bonus. *Remove paralysis* negates the effect for one person or allows a new save with a +4 resistance bonus for two people or +2 for three to four people.

**This Guy's Tough:** Mummies are resistant to blows, taking half damage from physical attacks. After damage is halved, the remaining damage must exceed the mummy's damage reduction to actually harm it. There is no way around the mummy's resistance to blows, but you can increase your damage to compensate. Weapons with high damage capability are an obvious choice. Using weapons two-handed allows you to add one-and-a-half times your Strength bonus to damage, making the most of each attack. Power Attack is also a good option; don't be afraid to use this feat to maximum effect since a hit that deals little damage won't harm the mummy anyway. To overcome the mummy's damage reduction, it is wise to have a weapon with at least a +1 enhancement. If you do not have a magic weapon, try the *magic weapon* or *shillelagh* spells.

**Fire and Magic:** Mummies are particularly vulnerable to magical and non-magical fire-based attacks. Although expensive at low levels, alchemist's fire is a great weapon against the dry husk of a mummy. Damage spells are good, but fire spells are better. The most effective low-level spells include *burning hands, flame blade, flaming sphere,* and *produce flame.* Keep in mind that cure spells damage undead, so feel free to dump useless spells for spontaneous cure spells. *Disrupt undead* can come in handy, dealing just enough damage to finish off a badly wounded mummy.

**Rotten Mummy:** Mummy rot is arguably the most devastating disease known. Successful saving throws do not allow a character to recover, and the DC of 20 makes preventing damage a hard task at best. A *remove disease* spell is the best cure for mummy rot, but at low levels you might be relying on the local temple for help. Remember that a Heal check can replace a saving throw to buy time until the disease is removed.

**Tactics:** When combating undead, a turning attempt should always be the first action. If the cleric is successful, the party should follow up with fire-based attacks to destroy the mummy.

A rogue is often most useful searching for and disabling traps that are all too often present in a mummy's lair. Bolster the Fortitude saves of melee combatants; the best defense against mummy rot is to not contract it. Mummies move slowly, so take advantage of their speed with hit-and-run tactics. If you expect to fight mummies, have the party druid rig a *fire trap* on a door through which you can lure the mummies.

## NPC Mummies

The standard mummy as presented in the *Monster Manual* is great for challenging low-level PCs or as a random encounter in ancient ruins or isolated dungeons. However, when faced with PCs of higher level, the mummy needs a few more tricks to challenge the group. Advancement in Hit Dice is an option, but adding a character class increases the mummy's power and can provide a good story for an adventure. Below are some example adventure scenarios:

**Sorcerer:** A naturally mummified corpse animated by an evil god is a horrid villain. It's even more of a horrid villain when the mummy is granted the power of a sorcerer to help carry out whatever plans the animating god has.

Since mummies generally have high Charisma scores, they make good sorcerers. Mummy sorcerers animated by a deity, as in the above scenario, know the spells that will best aid the mummy in its particular mission. In general, mummy sorcerers prefer damage spells, especially from the Necromancy school, but they never use spells with the fire descriptor.

**Blackguard:** Great heroes and champions of war are highly revered by the people they fight for. Often immortalized through mummification upon their demise, the preserved icon serves as a symbol of hope to the living. Unfortunately, conflict on the Material Plane tends to have repercussions in other planes. A powerful outsider wronged by the deceased hero could take vengeance by animating the mummy of the hero.

Under the tutelage of an evil outsider, such a mummy can become a foul agent of evil, a blackguard. The blackguard's abilities are based on Wisdom and Charisma, both of which are typically high scores for mummies. A mummy blackguard's aura of despair combines well with its despair ability, paralyzing enemies for an advantage to its smite good and sneak attacks. Preferred mummy blackguard spells include inflict spells (to heal its wounds), *bull's strength,* (to boost its combat abilities), and *protection from elements* (to offset its fire vulnerability). A mummy blackguard who was a paladin in life might gain the fallen paladin blackguard abilities as though it retained its paladin levels.

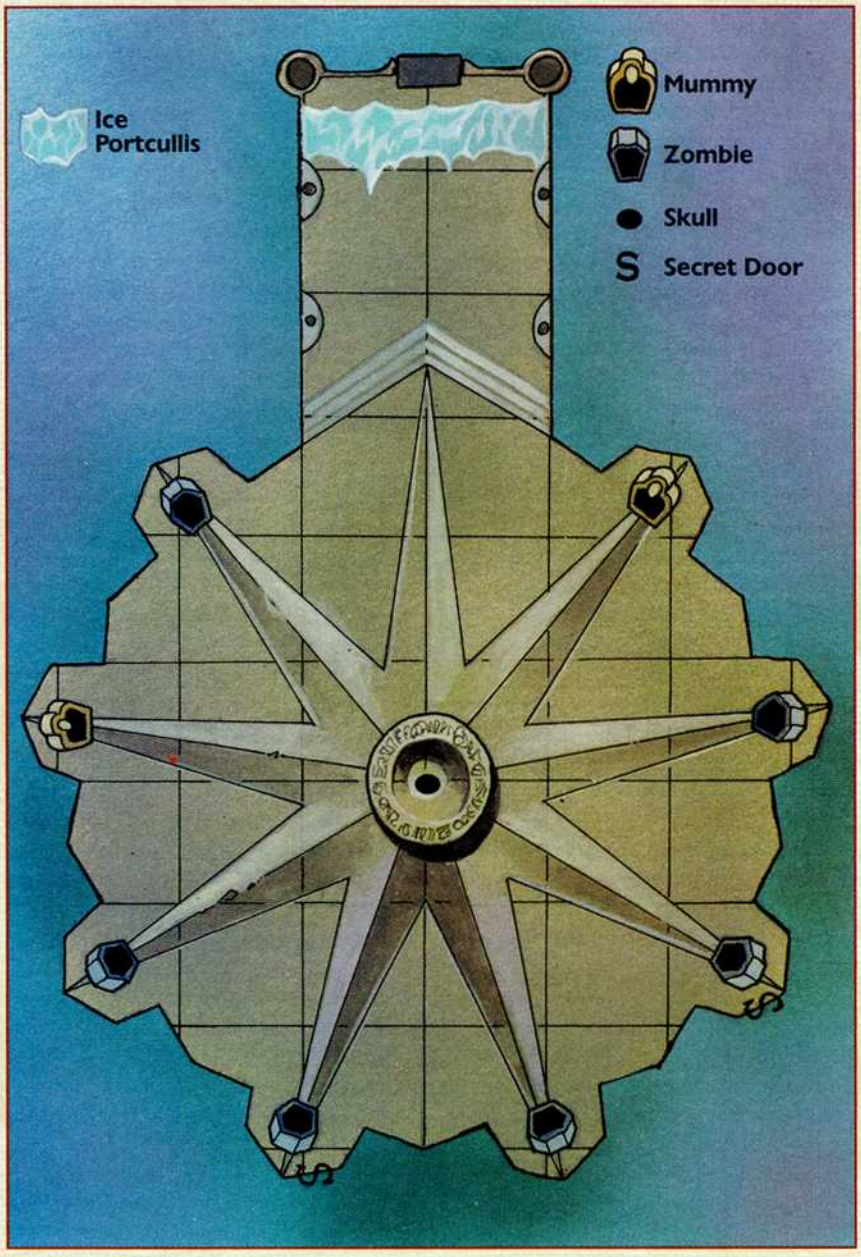
**Cleric:** The religious leaders of ancient civilizations were often perceived as the physical manifestation of the gods. These clerics were the bond between their people and the immortals they served,

so they were the representation of the gods if not the true manifestation. Some clerics wish to continue leading their people as a divine conduit even beyond death. These clerics ensure that after death, their flesh is preserved and their spirit "reawakened."

Mummy clerics are fearsome creatures, usually commanding a group of lesser undead and fanatic acolytes. Common domains of mummy clerics include Death, Destruction, Evil, Law, and Protection, but this is dependent on the deity worshiped. Mummy clerics prefer spells that weaken opponents (*bane, doom, bestow curse*), protect or strengthen their immortal bodies (*desecrate, resist elements, spell immunity*), or spells that cause suffering (*blindness/deafness, contagion, poison*).

**Monk:** Within secluded monasteries, monks strive for perfection of body, mind, and spirit. The road to perfection is a long one, requiring discipline and patience. Those seeking a shortcut can find it among some unscrupulous orders that use mummification to attain perfection of the body. Free from the demands of the flesh, the monk can focus exclusively on the balance of mind and spirit.

This might seem an odd class for undead creatures to take, but the mummy meets the alignment qualification, and the abilities of the monk compliment, or compensate for, the mummy's. Flurry of blows and the monks unarmed base attack bonus provide the mummy with potent pummeling power along with a stunning attack and more chances to spread disease. The monk's unarmored speed makes up for the mummy's poor mobility, and evasion provides protection from fire spells.




## Magic Items

Many mummies are preserved with the belief that the deceased will require its body in the afterlife. To aid mummies in their journey to the next life, they are often entombed with items of protection. *Rings of protection* and *rings of elemental resistance* are common, as are *scarabs* and other magical jewelry. Scrolls offer protection to spellcasting mummies, and jewels in the form of *ioun stones* can be found in the tombs of wealthy individuals. Tombs are often filled with guardian statues, some of which can serve the mummy as *figurines of wondrous power*. Mummies highly prize any treasures they possessed in life and do not take lightly the theft of their belongings.

## Mummy Variations

All mummy variations presented are identical to the mummy found on page 138 of the *Monster Manual* with the following exceptions:

**Clay Mummy:** Clay mummies do not have the fire vulnerability special quality. Instead, they have the bludgeoning vulnerability ability described below.

*Bludgeoning Vulnerability (Ex):* A clay mummy takes normal damage from bludgeoning weapons. The mummy's immunity to blows does not apply to bludgeoning weapons.

**Ice Mummy:** A creature that succumbs to an ice mummy's rot freezes and shatters, melting into nothing at the first thaw. Ice mummies have the cold subtype ability described below.

*Cold Subtype (Ex):* Cold immunity; double damage from fire except on a successful save.

**Bog Mummy:** A creature that succumbs to a bog mummy's rot breaks down into a moist, compost-like substance, washing away at the first rain.

## Lair of the Ice Mummy

This lair is fairly typical of mummy tombs presenting common traps, enchantments, and monsters. In this case, the lair is the guard station to the

secret treasure rooms of Dem Hazed, glacial stronghold of the evil cleric Ameran of the North.

Frosty white mist hangs lazily in the chill air of the room, which is carved from solid ice. The floor is covered with a thin layer of sand, providing some traction on the slick surface of the ice. A dim light glows softly through the mist from the room; it emanates from an altar of dark ice in the center of the room, upon which sits a black skull.

The altar is carved from a block of frozen unholy water and glows due to a *continual flame* placed within it. The black skull atop the altar is enchanted with an *unhallow* spell and trapped with a *greater glyph of warding*. As per the *unhallow* spell's description, there is a spell effect tied to it. In this case, the site provides *protection from elements (fire)* to undead within the spell's radius. Destroying the skull has no effect on the *unhallow* spell but does trigger the glyph.

The temperature within the room hovers around 23 degrees Fahrenheit. While undead are immune to subdual damage caused by the cold temperature, unprotected PCs are subject to cold effects (see page 86 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*) if they stay in the area too long.

**Trap (EL 2):** An ice portcullis is triggered when either of the mummies steps on a trigger stone directly in front of their alcoves. The portcullis is a 2-foot-thick wall of ice (72 hp/10 ft. square) that falls directly in front of the door.

***Ice Portcullis Trap:*** CR 2; +10 melee (3d6/x2 crit); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20). Note: Damage applies only to those underneath the portcullis. The portcullis blocks the passageway.

**Trap (EL 6):** *Greater glyph of warding* has been cast on the black skull that rests upon the altar in the center of the room and is set off when touched or otherwise disturbed.

***Greater Glyph of Warding:*** CR 6 spell, no reset, 20-ft-radius burst; *circle of doom* (1d8 + 15 points of damage, Fortitude save DC 17 halves); Search (DC 30); Disable Device (DC 30). Note: The negative energy released by *circle of doom* cures undead rather than harming them.

**Creatures (EL 6):** The undead guardians of Ameran maintain a ceaseless vigil over this area. They wait in their alcoves until they see or hear the PCs, at which point they attack. Two ice mummies are mixed in with a group of zombies. The zombies and mummies are indistinguishable from each other since the corpses were all mummified by freezing prior to animation.

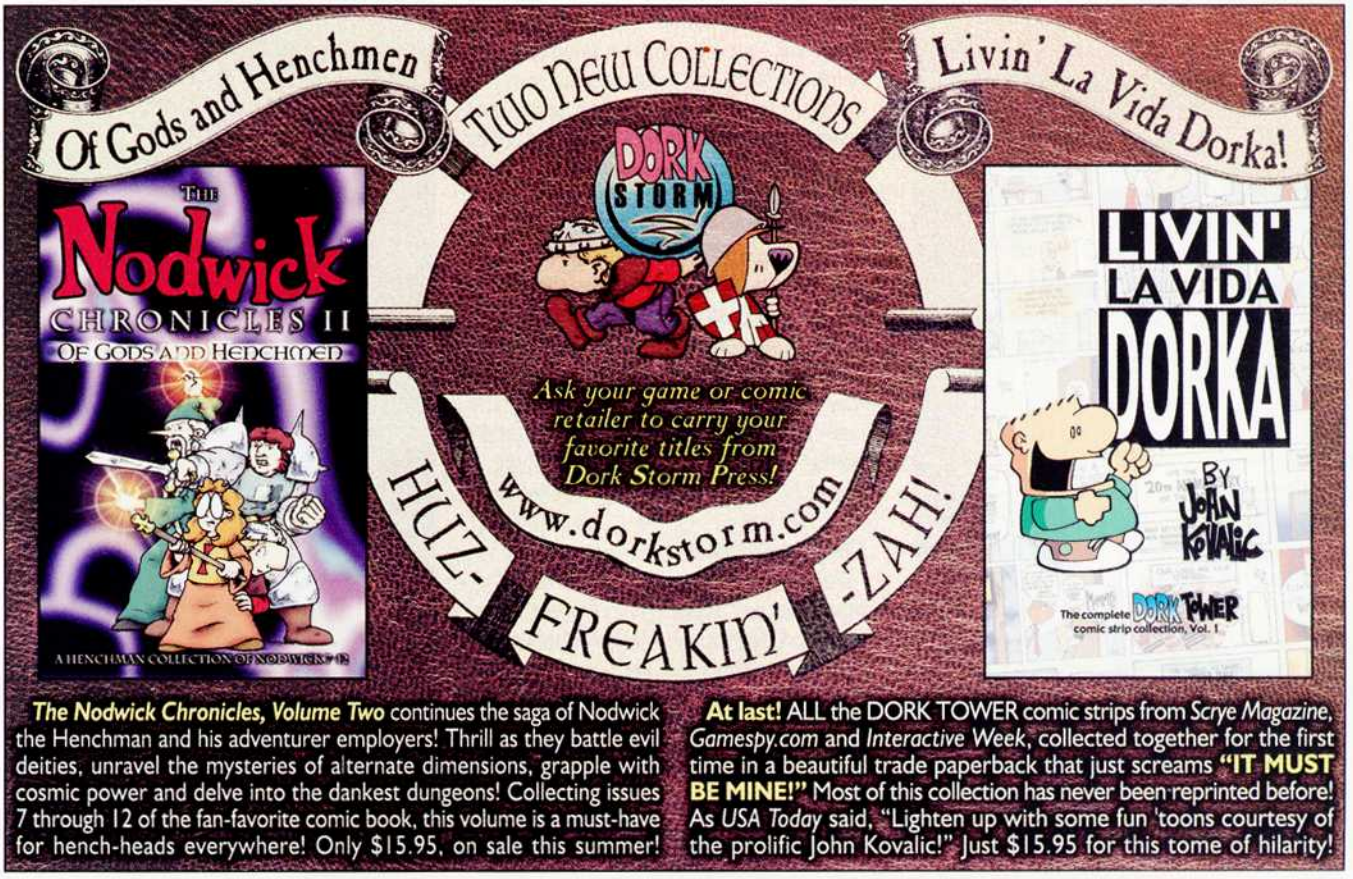
**Ice Mummies (2):** CR 3; Medium-size undead; HD 6d12+3; hp 42 each; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (-1 Dex, +8 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 17; Atk +6 melee (1d6+4, slam); SA despair, mummy rot; SQ undead, resistant to blows, damage reduction 5/+1, fire vulnerability, cold subtype; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 17, Dex 8, Con —, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 15.

*Skills:* Hide +8, Listen +9, Move Silently +8, Spot +9. *Feats:* Alertness, Toughness.

**Zombies (6):** CR 1/2; Medium-size undead; HD 2d12+3; hp 16 each; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (-1 Dex, +2 natural) touch 9, flat-footed 11; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, slam); SQ undead, partial actions only; AL N; Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 8, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Feats:* Toughness.

**SQ—Partial Actions Only (Ex):** Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only partial actions. D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# OLD ANGRATH'S SMOKEHOUSE

by Ed Greenwood · Illustrated by David Day

Old Angrath's Smokehouse, a local landmark in Red Larch, stands well back from the Long Road, to the east of that caravan-route. It's near the northern edge of Red Larch proper (though well within the outlying farms of that town) and is reached along its own rutted cart-drive. Turn off the Long Road at Nurnath's chicken barns (the green tiled roof of his large, fairly new roadside barn is distinctive) and follow the cart-track between the hornapple orchards of Mragan Gulther and the pasture belonging to Indurr "Warsword" Stalnstern (a retired mercenary turned cattleman) for about a mile.

The cart-drive then climbs a small, tree-cloaked hill and ends in a wagon-turn. The hill belongs to Angrath Dree, and the aromatic smoke drifting from the hilltop leads even travelers unfamiliar with Red Larch to Old Angrath's Smokehouse.

What makes Old Angrath both very busy and somewhat notorious is that she's known to be a Harper "eyes and ears" who allows Those Who Harp to use her smokehouse as a meeting place and item drop location.

## What Meets The Eye

The wagon-turn is a round, muddy area strewn with gravel. Here and there, the earth is disturbed, as though things have been buried and then dug up again. Curious visitors who are bold enough to dig their own holes sometimes find a large, flat stone about a foot below the surface. Those finding such stones are advised that they mark the presence of something buried for Harper business.

The wagon-turn occupies most of the northern end of the hilltop; beyond it, to the north, is a small outcropping of rock crowned by a signal beacon (a large unlit fire, shielded from wet weather by cut saplings and bark propped up around it in a cone shape). Beyond the rocks, the hill falls away steeply into brambles.

To the south of the wagon-turn, the hilltop rises slightly to a herb garden. At its peak stands the remnant of a lone felsul tree that rises perhaps eight feet off the ground: the trunk and one horizontal limb, held up by a wooden prop. Hanging from this bough is a storm-lantern, and beneath it is the hollow that holds Angrath's fire pits. The prevailing wind on the hilltop is out of the northwest, and so the three smokehouses (looking very much like small but tall, unusually tidy one-room stone cottages) stand in a cluster to the southeast of the lantern-tree.

To the southwest, well down the hill, is a trash-heap dominated by old soot-caked barrels and several smoke-damaged wooden boxes (temporary miniature smokehouses that Angrath drags back up the hill into service at the height of her work season). Angrath dwells inside the hill, in a few small, root-walled caverns with windows to the east. Her home is an untidy warren of stored fruit, vegetables, and herbs, and it has been deliberately littered with old buckets, spokes of broken wagon-wheels, and the like. All of this "homey trash" (as Angrath calls it) serves to conceal many yellowing or crumbling scraps of parchment and vellum that bear written messages. She knows precisely where each message is, but a thief or brigand trying to snatch a particular writing would have to search long and hard.

## Old Angrath

"Old" Angrath Dree is a CG female human Exp4/Sor9/War2. Angrath is a wrinkled, obviously aging woman who retains broader shoulders and mightier thews than many large fighting-men. She's bow-legged, fat, and ugly, and she shuffles when she moves. Long, gray-white hair hangs around her in an untidy cloud except when she's working with food or her axe (her favored weapon—with a supplement of throwing daggers—as well as her most-used working tool). Her underground dwelling contains many nooks hollowed out of the earth that hold spare axes and weapons, as well as a handful of healing potions and, for emergencies, potions that duplicate her favored escape spell: *gaseous form.*

### ELMINSTER'S NOTES

The woodcutters who bring Angrath her wood are Harpers; unloading and stacking the wood gives them plenty of opportunities to converse with her, even if clients are present. The hill is honeycombed with hiding-places for items, but these tend to be cached weapons, gear, and supplies, not unique or hard-to-replace items or valuables. Once Angrath was the guardian of many such things, but no more.

This is due to the reason she also stores and passes on many cryptic or even false messages—Those Who Harp know very well that Angrath's Smokehouse has become too well known to be secure.

Angrath knows it, too, and 'tis a credit to her pride and her resolve that she pretends not to and goes on playing a dangerous role.

That's not to say her home isn't a refuge for Harpers on the run. Nor does it mean Angrath's ignorant of Harper doings in the Sword Coast lands. She does take care that she never knows enough to endanger fellow Harpers, knowing that she could fall into the clutches of Zhentarim or Red Wizards who could use spells to rummage through her memories and knowledge.

If Angrath becomes gaseous anywhere on her land, she knows the cracks, passages, and tiny fissures that riddle the hilltop and can use them to flee into or out of her home, and away into the trees (the trees of her hilltop trail down the hillsides to the northeast and southeast to become hedgerows dividing the darm fields of others, providing her with several miles of "scrub cover" to move around in.

Officially, Angrath makes her living smoking meats and fish and by selling dried and powdered herbs and ointments. Angrath's ointments include the standard list of alchemical items found in the *Player's Handbook,* along with four unique herbal and sap concoctions.

**Biteabate:** This soft white gel soothes temporary hurts, clears the head, and relieves the pain of minor bruises and wounds. Each application of biteabate heals 1d8 points of subdual damage.

**Cost:** 20 gp; **Alchemy DC to Create:** 20; **Weight:** 1 lb.

**Brightvigil:** This clear, light liquid induces wakefulness, making the wearer less likely to succumb to magical sleep effects. Brightvigil provides a +5 alchemical bonus on saving throws made to resist sleep effects. The effects of brightvigil last one hour.

**Cost:** 30 gp; **Alchemy DC to Create:** 15; **Weight:**—

**Softshield:** This thick, pungent paste reduces the chance of infection. If applied within 10 minutes of the time of infection, softshield provides a +1 alchemical bonus to saving throws made to resist the initial infection of disease. It provides no benefit on subsequent saving throws to resist the disease.

**Cost:** 10 gp; **Alchemy DC to Create:** 15; **Weight:** 1 lb.

**Focus:** Made from steeped duskwood bark and a selection of herbs found near Angrath's, focus is one of the part-time alchemist's most successful and valuable mixtures. Focus provides a +2 alchemical bonus to Concentration checks. This benefit lasts for 10 minutes.

**Cost:** 30 gp; **Alchemy DC to Create:** 25; **Weight:**—

## The Daily Smoke

Angrath cures her meats in brine. Between curing batches, she boils her brine in old cauldrons, skims off the scum, and seasons the water with her own mixture of herbs, spices, and rock salt. Then the cauldrons are emptied back into well-seasoned duskwood barrels, and meats are put into the barrels and held under the level of the brine with weighing stones. Every four days, Angrath removes the meat, skims off any scum, stirs the brine well, and repacks the barrel.

When cured, the meat is washed in fire-warmed water and then given a cold rinse. Salt deposits are scrubbed away, and then meat is hung on hooks, in iron baskets, and in metal pincers in the warm room of the smokehouse to dry.

When meats are cured, Angrath cold smokes them in one of three separate smokehouses—small, square tile-roofed stone cottages with vents in their roof peaks. Inside, they're identical: a flagstone-floored single room with a smoke vent in the center of the floor. Over the smoke vent stands a low table made of old scrap metal covered with remnants of shields so that there are plenty of gaps in the tabletop. This baffle helps to spread the smoke.

Parallel bars of duskwood and shadow wood run across the room, their ends resting in sockets in the interior walls. The meats hang from these bars on many stout hooks and baskets.

Beneath the smoke vent of each smokehouse is a buried pipe that descends straight down for a foot or so and then curves smoothly around to a more horizontal, ten-foot-long run underground to Angrath's fire pit. This long run descends about a foot as it goes, and Angrath's pipe is old dwarf-made pipe-tile.

The far end of the smokepipe is a hole (about 3 feet deep and a little less across, with the smokepipe entering one side of it about a foot below the top) lined with stones and covered with a large stone lid. Angrath has built her smokehouses so that the smokepipes converge and her three fire pits are clustered together (upwind of the smokehouses).

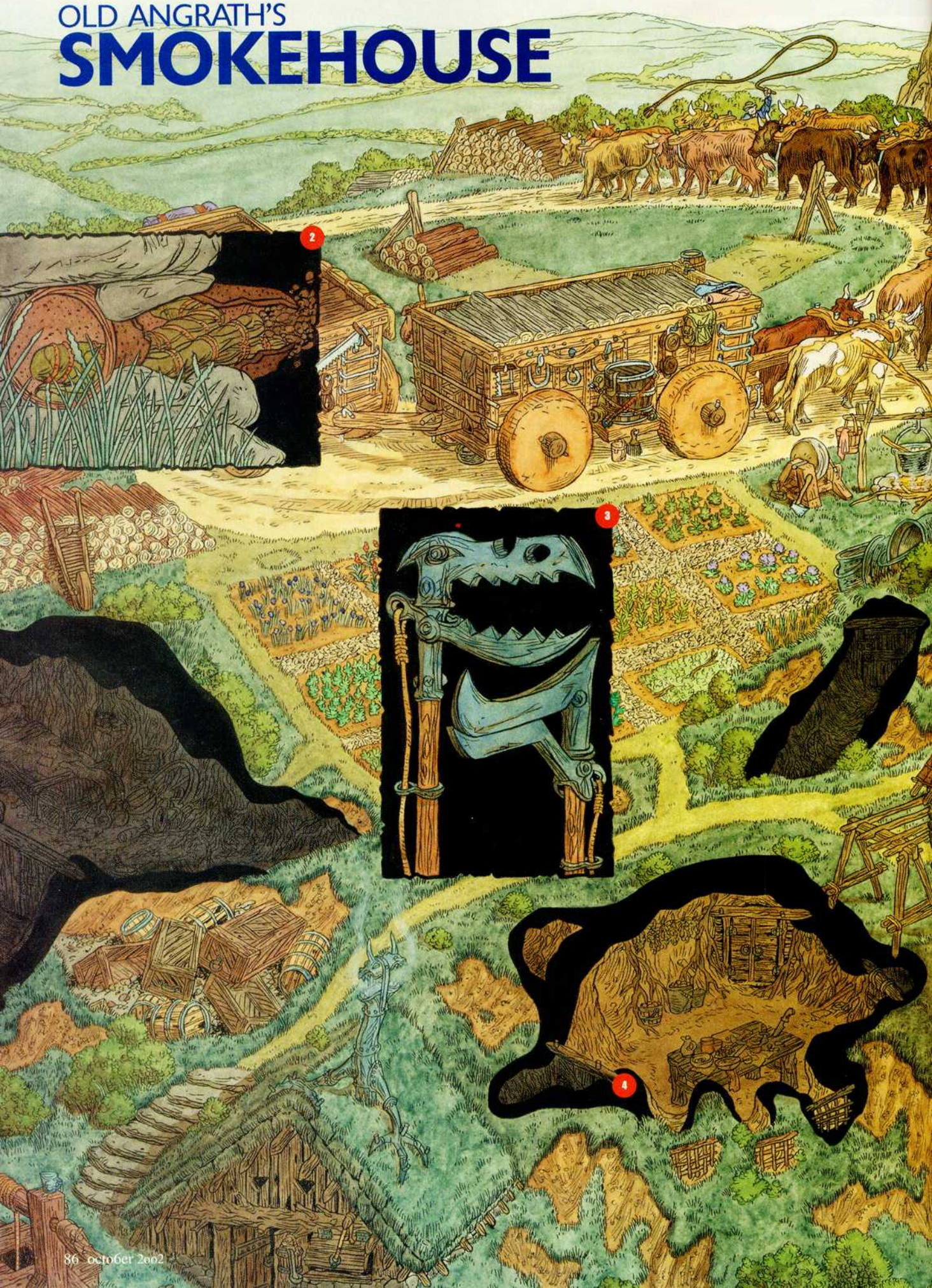
In the pits, Angrath starts fires with dry hardwood, lets them burn down to glowing coals, and then adds damp hardwood chips and shavings. As might be expected, most of her time is spent with axe and hand-maul, chopping duskwood logs into fuel capable of producing the dense, white smoke necessary to cure the meat. D

## IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Old Angrath's Smokehouse is an out-of-the-way, out-of-the-ordinary venue through which the Harpers can communicate with their agents and other good folk, including adventurers. It's also purposefully seeded with misinformation, so you're free to choose which of the leads listed below are true and which are not.

- The Arcane Brotherhood of Luskan has devoted much of its attention and energy in recent years to rooting out a traitor in its midst—a wizard who time and again betrays Brotherhood plots to outsiders. Several members of the Brotherhood have died, others have suffered narrow escapes, and many of their plans have accomplished little, all thanks to this informant. The Harpers know that there is no traitor within the Brotherhood. By chance, many senior Brotherhood members started using a linked set of nine ancient Imaskari *crystal balls* looted from a dragon's lair—crystals that allow clear speech and images to be relayed between them in addition to their normal scrying powers. The Brotherhood does not know that this set has not nine crystals, but ten. A Harper sorceress has the tenth crystal, and so far she has been able eavesdrop on the Brotherhood without being detected.
- Someone in the North (not part of any known evil group) has somehow managed to find a means of locating dragons. This mage seems to delight in goading powerful dragons into attacking other dragons, awakening dragons by means of hired adventurers unwittingly led into contact with sleeping dragons in their lairs, and so on.
- Silverymoon is expanding at a great rate and attracting folk of wealth, creativity, and artistic skill. Inevitably, the dishonest, the corrupters, and the exploiters have moved in among them—and the Harpers have begun hunting these "dark shadows among the glory," acting as an increasingly energetic secret police for the city. Alustriel is aware of this Harper initiative, and these efforts make her both grateful and uneasy.

# OLD ANGRATH'S SMOKEHOUSE



1 Some "spreading vine" herbs cover rocks that can be lifted out of the earth to reveal small shallow-buried coffers where keys, coins, and written messages are stored. These coffers can be located with a DC 25 Search check.

2 Several old, disused firepits and smokepipe tunnels can be found down this side of the hill. The tunnels are used for storing weapons and long, thin tools (wrapped in oiled canvas to keep rust at bay). The tunnel entrances are lightly concealed, requiring a DC 10 Search check to locate.

3 Reaching hooks (ten-foot-long poles with hooks and "pincer" arms—one fixed jaw and one moving clamp jaw, operated with a pull rope) move smokehouse louvers. Angrath also uses them to place small metal message-storage coffers high in tree-crotches and hollows inside half-dead trees, all over the hilltop. Treat these reaching hooks as ransuers. They can be used as martial weapons.

4 Harpers know that all of the treasure maps displayed prominently on workbenches are dangerous fabrications that lead those using them into underground peril (known Undermountain monster lairs, dangerous corners of the Underdark, goblin and kobold warrens, and the like).

Living Greyhawk™ JOURNAL

Issue Number Sixteen • Harvester, 592 CY

A Publication of the RPGA Network
Editor: Erik Mona • Campaign Director: Stephen Radney-MacFarland
*Enlightenment can penetrate even the helm of iron.* —Cuthbertine proverb

# CAMPAIGN NEWS

## ROAD OF SKULLS TO OPEN IN 593 CY

Starting in 2003 (or the 593 campaign year for those of you stuck in CY mode) the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign will open a whole new world of opportunities for those with a thirst for danger and the heart of a hero. Next year, your character will get a chance to try his blade against the forces of Turrosh Mak or walk down luz's Road of Skulls (if you have the courage). If he has the wits, he might even survive. You'll be able to do this thanks to the campaign's brand new "metaregional" structure. News about the reorganization of LIVING GREYHAWK has already spread on the Internet, but for those of you not yet in the know, here's the scoop:

Starting next year, the Circle of Six will be reorganized, with each member put in charge of one of five "metaregions," each consisting of a number of Triad-controlled regions. Each metaregion is grouped together by either a common theme (as in the case of luz's Border States) or by Flanaess geography. The groups are as follows:

**Metaregion I:** Sheldomar Valley; Bissel, Geoff, Gran March, Keoland, Yeomanry, Principality of Ulek

**Metaregion II:** Tuflik, Fals, and Velverdyva Trade Route; Dyvers, Ekbir, Ket, Tusmit, Veluna, Verbobonc

**Metaregion III:** luz's Border States; Bandit Kingdoms, Furyondy, Highfolk, Perrenland, Shield Lands

**Metaregion IV:** Nyrond and Environs; County of Urnst, Duchy of Urnst, Nyrond, Ratik, Theocracy of the Pale

**Metaregion V:** Against the Brotherhood; Ahlissa [Adri], Ahlissa [Naerie], Bone March [Knurl], Lordship of the Isles, Onnwal, Sea Barons, Sunndi, Dullstrand

The goal of this reorganization is to provide a more concrete structure for communication, scenario sanctioning, and problem resolution. However, there is another benefit as well—metaregional scenarios. With the discontinuation of adaptable scenarios, a void has been left in the Living Greyhawk experience—one that we hope to fill with new metaregional scenarios.

What does all this mean to you? A couple of points bear particular attention. Under the new organization, players and Triads will have only one circle member to pose questions to as opposed to all six under the previous model. As a bonus, when your character is thrown into a slave pit in the heart of Dorakaa, you will know exactly who to ask about escaping. From the opposite side, this means that each circle member will get a fraction of the questions that they previously received. This leads to a quicker response time and a more thorough understanding of the issues that crop up within a metaregion.

The new system also affects the way scenarios will be sanctioned. Currently, regional modules are sent directly to HQ to be reviewed and sanctioned. Major events and other logjams can sometimes cripple this process, which often is quite time consuming. The new system eases this burden by giving the events another round of editing before they are even sent to HQ. Both the local triad and their respective circle member will work together to polish the events to a high sheen before sending them to HQ for final approval. This is an extra step that is sure to shorten the time a scenario spends at HQ. In the end, this means that conventions will get the new events earlier, resulting in better-prepared judges and more fun for you.

Last, but certainly not least, this new structure allows for a whole new type of play experience. Metaregional scenarios will allow you to get involved with power struggles and dangers that cross the boundaries of regional affairs. Alongside other adventurers who share your metaregion, you will be able to take the battle to the Old One, thwart the greater plans of the Scarlet Brotherhood, and fight back against the foul priests taking residence in the Temple of Elemental Evil. Don't be sur-

prised if some of the villains you thought were only a local menace make an appearance or two as well. Triads and their respective circle members will work on these plotlines together, making sure to deliver a high quality product with a unique feel, not to mention a challenging experience.

Each metaregion will produce eight events per year. These events will only be available for ordering in their particular metaregion, but characters from any region will be able to play them (those from outside the region will have to pay a higher time unit cost). By their very nature, most of these scenarios will be set for higher level characters, although some scenarios suitable for greener adventurers will crop up. Look for these events to start showing up at your local conventions and gamedays early next year.

Sharpen your blades, stock up on scrolls, and polish your armor now because the metaregions are going to take you to new heights of adventure.

luz is waiting.

Jason Bulmahn
Metaregional Circle member for luz's Border States
luztheEvil@aol.com

## NO WORD FROM TENH

Dark rumors and strange tales concerning the Duchy of Tenh can be heard in every tavern throughout the city of Greyhawk. The region, once a proud and noble land, has fallen on hard times since the Greyhawk Wars. Most of the lands are now directly under the thumb of the Old One. None of this, however, explains the complete lack of communication with the shattered lands. Merchants and traders making rounds to the settlements have failed to return, and scouting parties have disappeared without a trace. No word has come from Tenh in more than a month. Many of the adventurers traveling there in search of strange black stones have failed to return, as well.

For more information on this growing concern, play COR02-11: *Escape From Tenh*, part one of the *Ether Threat* plotline.

**The D&D FAQ is Official:** As many of you already know, the Frequently Asked Questions document produced by Wizards of the Coast is officially accepted for use in the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign. This means that at the current moment, all of you

**Your character will get a chance to try his blade against the forces of Turrosh Mak or walk down luz's Road of Skulls.**

## New Skill for the Living Greyhawk campaign

The next time your character gains a level, you might want to consider the following skill when allotting those precious points. Who knows? It might just save you from a horrible fate.

**Knowledge (Ether Creatures)** (Int: Trained Only)

This skill represents an understanding of creatures native to the Ethereal Plane.
**Check:** Answering a question with this field of study has a DC of 10 (for really easy questions), 15 (for basic questions), or 20 to 30 (for really tough questions).
**Retry:** No. The check represents what the character knows, and thinking about a topic a second time doesn't let the character know something that the character never learned in the first place.
**Special:** An untrained Knowledge check is simply an Intelligence check. Without actual training, a character only knows common knowledge.

This skill is a class skill for clerics, sorcerers, and wizards. Any PC who has 3 ranks in this skill will be eligible for a special event at a later date. There may be other ways to qualify for this event—keep a watch on *Campaign News* for breaking information.

## Recent Rulings

A few bits of clarity from the Circle that send the Chaos domain running for cover:

**The D&D FAQ is Official:** As many of you already know, the Frequently Asked Questions document produced by Wizards of the Coast is officially accepted for use in the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign. This means that at the current moment, all of you *shield* spell enthusiasts have to rely on only a +7 AC bonus without the full benefits of three-quarters cover.

**Regionals at the Big Three:** Gen Con, Origins, and Winter Fantasy have long been showcase conventions for the RPGA Network. As such, the Circle believes that no region should shine above any other at these premiere events. This means that regional scenarios should not be run at the same venue during the hours of these conventions without approval from the campaign staff. Events run on dates immediately before and after the show are, of course, acceptable.

**It's All in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*:** There has been a bit of confusion over what items can be purchased from the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*. To clarify, without campaign documentation the only magic items available for purchase are found within the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, exactly as they appear. This means that magical arrows must be purchased in lots of 50 (as lots of 3 are not priced out in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*). All potions, scrolls, and wands purchased must be listed on tables 8-18, 8-24, 8-25, or 8-27 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, respectively. These items are always at minimum caster level and without any metamagic feats applied. Charged items can only be acquired fully charged. As always, campaign documentation supercedes this ruling and allows the purchase of non-standard items.

## What is LIVING GREYHAWK?

LIVING GREYHAWK is the largest, most popular shared-world DUNGEONS & DRAGONS campaign in the history of gaming. Run under the auspices of the RPGA Network (RPGA), the campaign offers gamers around the world the chance to contribute to the developing history of Oerth by playing specially constructed adventures at conventions, game days, or in the comfort of home. For more information on how you can get involved in the campaign, visit www.livinggreyhawk.com

# Playing Pieces:
# DENIZENS OF DARKNESS

by Frederick Weining · illustrations by Karl Kerschl and Kalman Andrasofszky

Two months ago, *Living Greyhawk Gazetteer* co-author Frederick Weining revealed the treacherous secrets of Erelhei-Cinlu, the decadent dark elf city that looms over the legendary Vault of the Drow. The following NPCs support that article, as all have ties to that den of evil. Dungeon Masters interested in using these villains on the surface world should have little difficulty changing a detail here and there to give the characters a reason to visit the world above. Alternatively, you should feel free to completely rework the character backgrounds as appropriate to your personal campaign flavor. All location notes refer to the article "The Vault of the Drow," which appeared in *Dragon* #298.

**Ool Eurts, Male Drow Sorg:** CR 10; Medium-size humanoid (elf); HD 9d4+18; hp 40; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 13, flat-footed 12); Atk +7 melee (1d6+3/crit 18-20/x2, *+2 rapier*); SQ Darkvision 120 ft., drow traits, SR 20; AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +10; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 19, Wis 14, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Alchemy +16, Concentration +13, Craft (painting) +14, Diplomacy +7, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Listen +4, Scry +13, Search +6, Spellcraft +13, Spot +4; Enlarge Spell, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll, Still Spell.

*Spells Known* (6/7/7/6/4; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect poison, ghost sound, mage hand, mending, ray of frost;* 1st—*charm person, erase, mage armor, magic missle, shield;* 2nd—*glitterdust, mirror image, magic mouth, web;* 3rd—*haste, illusory script, secret page;* 4th—*improved invisibility, phantasmal killer.*

*Possessions: +2 rapier, ring of protection +2, Nolzur's marvelous pigments,* scroll of *alter self, potion of invisibility.*

The drow artiste Ool Eurts has become quite a celebrity in his adopted city of Erelhei-Cinlu. Invitations to the popular exhibitions at his Twilight Gallery are sought after by noble and commoner alike, as well as by visitors from many distant realms (including the Abyss). Although most renowned for his dreamscapes, his portraits are of excellent quality, and his erotica is found in many

wealthy homes. He can be seen wandering the streets of the city in search of new subjects, his favorite being combinations of the grotesque and beautiful. Eurts maintains an entourage of doppelgangers who not only model for him, but also impersonate him, to distract his fans when working on difficult projects. Eurts's renown extends far beyond the Vault of the Drow—some of his works have reached the surface world, where wealthy human collectors have no clue of the master's origins or whereabouts.

**Drucena, Female Drow Brd11:** CR 12; Medium-size humanoid (elf); HD 11d6-11; hp 27; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 13, flat-footed 12); Atk +8/+3 melee (1d4/crit 19-20/x2, *dagger of venom*); SQ Darkvision 120 ft., drow traits, SR 22; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +8; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 18.

*Skills and Feats:* Alchemy +11, Diplomacy +20*, Disable Device +3, Hide +2, Jump +10, Listen +5, Perform +16*, Pick Pocket +15, Search +4, Spot +5, Swim +10, Use Magic Device +19*; Alertness, Craft Wand, Enlarge Spell, Weapon Finesse (dagger).

* Includes +2 competence bonus from *circlet of persuasion.*

*Spells Known* (3/4/4/4/2; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0—*daze, flare, ghost sound, mage hand, ray of frost, read magic;* 1st—*charm person, feather fall, hypnotism, mage armor;* 2nd—*detect thoughts, enthrall, suggestion, tongues;* 3rd—*bestow curse, confusion, emotion, lesser geas;* 4th—*dimension door, dominate person, modify memory.*

*Possessions: Dagger of venom, ring of protection +2, circlet of persuasion, periapt of proof against poison.*

Drucena is the most prominent playwright currently working in Erelhei-Cinlu. This is due almost entirely to the fact that she is herself a theater-owner, and because of her connections to house Aleval by which she manages to disrupt the productions of rival theaters. The promise of steady employment and large audiences lures many performers into her stable of talents, and Drucena always encourages them to acquire new addictions and vices. She promotes her own legend by spreading rumors that she is the avatar of Zinzerena, but of course this is false; in fact, Drucena is a worshiper of Keptolo, who enjoys nothing better than elevating young performers to stardom, then helping them destroy themselves for the sake of the drama it provides.

Drucena's theater, the infamous Silver Stage in Erelhei-Cinlu's Ghetto of Performers, holds the city's largest performance space. The venue specializes in depravity and blood theater, which predictably packs the house for nearly every performance. Drucena prefers to act through agents on the rare occasions in which she interacts with the surface world, but rumors of a particularly artful or disturbing play might be enough to draw her from the relative safety of the Vault of the Drow in search of new artistic talent to recruit (willingly or otherwise).

**Telagos, Male Human Vampire Ftr11:** CR 13; Medium-size undead; HD 11d12; hp 71; Init +8; Spd 20 ft.; AC 29 (touch 11, flat-footed 28); Atk +21/+16/+11 melee (2d6+15/crit 17-20/x2 +2d6 unholy, *+1 unholy greatsword*); SA Blood drain, charm, children of the night, create spawn, energy drain; SQ Undead, damage reduction 15/+1, alternate form, cold and electricity resistance 20, fast healing 5, gaseous form, spider climb, vampire weaknesses; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +4; Str 26, Dex 19, Con —, Int 18, Wis 13, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +17, Heal +3, Hide +17, Intimidate +8, Jump +13, Knowledge (nature) +10, Knowledge (religion) +6, Listen +9, Move Silently +7, Search +12, Sense Motive +11, Spot +9, Tumble +8; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Endurance, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Quick

Draw, Sunder, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword).

*Possessions: +1 unholy greatsword, +4 full plate.*

The vampire-lord Telagos was once a mercenary for House Lenaf, having fled to the Vault from the surface nation of Geoff many years before. In proper drow form, he was betrayed by his employers at the start of one of their more foolish gambits, which ultimately resulted in the house's fall. House Lenaf was eventually replaced by house Despana, but not before Telagos had personally exterminated all the Lenaf survivors. Now, after more than 300 years among the drow, he has come to hate all nobles, drow or otherwise. He makes Sarcoma Keep, his stronghold in the Ghetto of the Dead, a haven for the enemies of the nobles, but has little real hope of seeing them all eliminated. Despite his centuries in the night below, Telagos longs to return to the surface world. A mention that his family has gained considerable political clout in Geoff during recent reclamation efforts against the giants who infested the nation during the Greyhawk Wars just might be enough to convince the brooding old warrior to make a trip to the surface to "reconnect" with his bloodline.

**Kemehdra, Female Drow Clrg:** CR 10; Medium-size humanoid (elf); HD 9d8-9; hp 31; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (touch 10, flat-footed 18); Atk +9/+4 melee (1d8+1/crit 19-20/x2 and *wounding, +1 longsword of wounding*); SQ Darkvision 120 ft., drow traits, SR 20; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Craft +12, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (religion) +12, Listen +6, Search +3, Spellcraft +10, Spot +6; Alertness, Enlarge Spell, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (longsword).

*Spells Prepared* (6/6/6/4/3/2; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*detect magic* (2), *detect poison* (2), *read magic, resistance;* 1st—*cause fear*, curse water, deathwatch* (2), *doom, inflict light wounds;* 2nd—*darkness* (2), *desecrate*, hold person* (2), *spiritual weapon;* 3rd—*animate dead*, bestow curse, blindness/deafness, speak with dead;* 4th—*discern lies, poison, unholy blight*;* 5th—*mark of justice, slay living*.*

*Domain spell. *Deity:* Kiaransali. *Domains:* Death (death touch once per day); Evil (cast evil spells as 10th level cleric).

*Possessions: +1 longsword of wounding, +3 chainmail, potion of ghoul touch, potion of invisibility.*

Kemehdra "the Carver" presides over Erelhei-Cinlu's Verdict Hall, a typically corrupt drow institution that preys upon the city's commoners. This priestess of Kiaransali has no power over the nobles, or even the city patrols, but she works hard to maintain an air of authority even in the face of these limitations. She has begun requiring confessions of guilt from the accused before they are sentenced, a process seldom bothered with in the past, and has hired a number of torturers to procure these confessions. This has lead to complaints of damaged merchandise from many slave-traders in the city. Kemehdra's ambitions are not limited to her current duties. In fact, she has invited an embassy from the ghoulish White Kingdom to pursue the possibility of a trading outpost in the Ghetto of Slaves.

**Govoc the Prophet, Male Drow Drd12:** CR 13; Medium-size humanoid (elf); HD 12d8-12; hp 42; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (touch 12, flat-footed 12); Atk +16/+11 melee (1d6+7, *+4 quarterstaff*); SQ Darkvision 120 ft., drow traits, druid abilities, SR 23; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +11; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 8, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Diplomacy +13, Escape Artist +9, Heal +18, Hide +9, Knowledge (nature) +18, Listen +10, Move Silently +5, Pick Pocket +9, Search +5, Spot +5; Blind-Fight, Brew Potion, Empower Spell, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff).

*Druid Abilities:* Nature sense, animal companion, woodland stride, trackless step, resist nature's lure, *wild shape* (dire, 4/day), venom immunity.

*Spells Prepared* (6/6/5/5/3/3/2; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*guidance* (3), *detect poison, mending* (2); 1st—*obscuring mist* (3), *shillelagh* (2), *magic fang;* 2nd—*charm person or animal* (2), *resist elements, soften earth and stone, warp wood;* 3rd—*contagion* (3), *meld into stone, dominate animal;* 4th—*dispel magic, freedom of movement, rusting grasp;* 5th—*unhallow, transmute mud to rock, transmute rock to mud;* 6th—*antilife shell, wall of stone.*

*Possessions: +4 quarterstaff, amulet of natural armor +2, bag of tricks (gray).*

Govoc the Prophet is the leader of the Poxbearers. Many years ago, he formed a secret cult dedicated to the worship

of an Elder Elemental power whose altar he discovered hidden in the sewers of Erelhei-Cinlu. The primitive rituals that he and his followers enact, however, do not constitute an actual religion. Instead, their rites are dedicated solely to summoning a manifestation of their "god," to whom they sacrifice living offerings. Any living creature will suffice, so Govoc and his beggars wander the streets collecting stray animals, or sometimes people, who are never seen again. The city authorities are aware of thisand use the beggars to handle certain awkward "disposal" jobs forthem, in return for being otherwise left alone.

## Merkin Street Triad

This three-member troop of Lurking Mimes claims the vicinity of Merkin Street in Erelhei-Cinlu's Ghetto of Performers as its territory. They sporadically solicit "donations" from local merchants and artists whom they have quietly intimidated, and take vengeance against any who defy the triad. Visitors to the city might be unaware of the danger presented by the Lurking Mimes and could easily misunderstand an encounter with them. Whether they choose to respond to indignities or disrespect by foreigners with wit, violence, or both, is impossible to predict, but the mimes' retort is always memorable.

**Trochas the Strange, Male Drow Rgr6/Asn6:** CR 13; Medium-size humanoid (elf); HD 6d10+18 plus 6d6+18; hp 90; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (touch 14, flat-footed 14); Atk +14/+9 melee (1d8+4/crit 19-20/x2, *+1 longsword*); SA Favored enemy (elves +2, humans +1), fight with two weapons, sneak attack +3d6, death attack; SQ Darkvision 120 ft., drow traits, SR 23, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked); AL NE; SV Fort +10, Ref +11, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +14, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +7, Hide +19, Intuit Direction +8, Listen +15, Move Silently +16, Pick Pocket +6, Search +4, Spot +13, Tumble +7, Use Rope +12, Wilderness Lore +7 (+5 Rank, +2 Wis); Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Silent Spell, Track.

*SA–Death Attack (Ex):* If the assassin studies a target for 3 rounds and then makes a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, the sneak attack can also paralyze (for 1d6+6 rounds) or kill the victim (Fortitude save, DC 18 to resist). See the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for details.

*Assassin Spells Prepared* (2/2/1; base DC = 12 + spell level): 1st–*spider climb* (2); 2nd–*alter self* (2); 3rd–*invisibility*.

*Ranger Spells Prepared* (2; base DC = 12 + spell level): 1st–*resist elements, magic fang*.

*Possessions: +1 longsword, +2 leather armor, mask of the skull.*

The mime Trochas, a drow of middle years, serves as the nominal leader of the Merkin Street Triad. He discovered his two young partners when they were still children, noticing the silent rapport they already shared with each other, along with their natural talents at camouflage. Seeing great potential in the pair, he fostered them into the society of the Lurking Mimes. Now he travels with them both within Erelhei-Cinlu, and occasionally outside the city. It would take a considerable bounty to draw the Merkin Street Triad from the Vault itself, but the Flanaess teems with rich would-be employers in search of the perfect silent killers, suggesting that the Lurking Mimes could appear anywhere in the surface world.

**Sinister Portira, Female Drow Rgr5/Asn5:** CR 11; Medium-size humanoid (elf); HD 5d10+5 plus 5d6+5; hp 55; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (touch 15, flat-footed 15); Atk +9/+4 melee (1d4+3/crit 19-20/x2, *+1 dagger*) and +9 melee (1d4+2/crit 19-20/x2, *+1 dagger*); SA Favored enemy (elves +2, humans +1), fight with two weapons, sneak attack +3d6, death attack; SQ Darkvision 120 ft., drow traits, SR 21, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked); AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +11, Will +6; Str 15, Dex 21, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +17, Disguise +17, Escape Artist +11, Hide +18, Listen +13, Move Silently +18, Search +10, Spot +10, Wilderness Lore +8; Dodge, Expertise, Mobility, Spring Attack, Track.

*Includes +2 competence bonus from *beret of persuasion.*

*SA—Death Attack (Ex):* If the assassin studies a target for 3 rounds and then makes a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, the sneak attack can also paralyze (for 1d6+5 rounds) or kill the victim (Fortitude save, DC 17 to resist). See the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* for details.

*Assassin Spells Prepared* (2/2; base DC = 12 + spell level): 1st—*ghost sound, spider climb*; 2nd—*alter self* (2).

*Ranger Spells Prepared* (1; base DC = 14 + spell level): 1st—*resist elements.*

*Possessions: +1 dagger* (2), *beret or persuasion* (as circlet), *ring of friend shield.*

Sinister Portira is an atypical drow female, showing deference to both her male mentor, Trochas, and her twin brother Opelleron. Of the three, she is the most graceful killer, using her forked daggers, or "tines," to great effect. Portira prefers to observe each victim for a long period before striking, but will not hesitate to join any fray at a moment's notice in order to assist her partners.

**Shadowy Opelleron, Male Drow Rgr5/Asn5:** CR 11; Medium-size humanoid (elf); HD 5d10+15 plus 5d6+15; hp 75; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (touch 12, flat-footed 15); Atk +13/+8 melee (1d3+5 subdual damage, unarmed strike); SA Favored enemy (elves +2, humans +1), fight with two weapons, sneak attack +3d6, death attack; SQ Darkvision 120 ft., drow traits, SR 21, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked); AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 18, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +13, Disguise +15, Hide +15, Jump +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +15, Search +10, Spot +8, Tumble +8, Wilderness Lore +8; Deflect Arrows, Improved Unarmed Strike, Run, Stunning Fist, Track.

*SA—Death Attack (Ex):* If the assassin studies a target for 3 rounds and then makes a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, the sneak attack can also paralyze (for 1d6+5 rounds) or kill the victim (Fortitude save, DC 16 to resist). See the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* for details.

*Assassin Spells Prepared* (2/1; base DC = 11 + spell level): 1st—*spider climb* (2); 2nd—*alter self.*

*Ranger Spells Prepared* (1; base DC = 14 + spell level): 1st—*pass without trace.*

*Possessions: Collar of armor +3* (as bracers), *ring of friend shield,* daggers (3).

Opelleron is a young male drow of tremendous strength. Unlike his highly agile sister, he prefers the tactile pleasures of strangling his victims. Both brother and sister are very protective of each other, a rare trait among drow siblings. As evidence of this, Opelleron and Portira wear matched *rings of friend shield* and ward each other almost selflessly when the need arises.

# Who Plays This Game?

by Stuart Pearson

Roleplaying games have often been misinterpreted as complex and inaccessible. To the outsider looking in, a gaming group might be viewed as a mysterious cabal with its own rites, language, and private understandings. Recall your own experience as a non-gamer being introduced to the game of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS for the first time. How did it happen?

Did you stumble into the basement as your older brother and his friends played? They might have propelled exotic-looking, multifaceted dice across a table littered with soda bottles, half-eaten pizza, and cardboard screens covered with elaborate fantasy artwork. Perhaps someone thrust a piece of paper at you and said, "Wanna play Zeke's elven Ranger? He's been grounded, and if Giladdin is played by the DM again, he's gonna choke!" Or maybe you had a more gradual introduction that involved your friends carrying you along with them as they began their journey of roleplaying, buying mysterious tomes and poring over them in their spare time.

Do you remember what it was like? Did you know an ogre from a troll or a half-elf from a halfling? Do you remember not having a clue what you were doing as you were told to roll this, save for that, or calculate your "THACo" (whatever that was . . .)? Do you ever wish that someone had sat you down in a friendly, non-threatening manner and explained why, what for, and how?

Now that you're an experienced player, you're likely to encounter times when you want to introduce a new player (or a new group of players) to the game. Teaching D&D to a player who doesn't even realize that there's a 3rd Edition might sound like an impossible task, so here are a few hints to get you started.

## Finding a New Player

Now that you are inspired by reliving the heady days of your own introduction to D&D, you need to find a suitable pupil. But where do you look?

A good place to start is within your own circle of friends. Some of them might already play D&D or have played it in the past. It sounds obvious at first glance, but the dream of all DMs who are looking for another D&D player is to find one who knows the rules already. If this is the case, then surely the hard work is done for you. Wrong.

This might create even more work as the new recruit has to be introduced to the kind of game your group likes to play. D&D players carry all sorts of gaming baggage with them. Your campaign might never be as immersive as the world of Feezelgrub run by the player's last DM. His idea of a great character might be one who can deal more than 41 points of damage in a single strike (and who strikes before the NPC has a chance to confuse the group with more of the storyline). Of course, your other players might even see the new addition to the group as a threat to the harmony of each game session as this gaming baggage is revealed.

Instead, why not recruit a player who has never rolled a d20 in her life?

**Possible Recruits:**
Brothers or sisters
Cousins
Roommates
Girlfriends or boyfriends
Neighbors
Acquaintances
Anyone with an imagination

There are many advantages to picking someone who has never roleplayed before; you're effectively starting with a clean slate that you can fill up with game-rules, house-rules, inspiration, enthusiasm, interest, and above-all, a love of D&D. If you add a new player, your candidate won't be burdened with preconceptions about the game. Your vision of elves as a noble but inwardly savage and corruptible race might be easier to accept. Your barbarians never wield axes—no problem. A dwarf without a beard . . . the possibilities are endless, but the hard part is gaining your candidate's attention.

## How Do You Get Them to Play?

To introduce a new player, all you need is simplicity and fun. If you can achieve this, then you have a roleplayer for life. If you cannot, then he might miss the game's potential for entertainment. Inviting a novice along to a gaming group that has been playing together for years, despite its potential upside, can be a big mistake. Shared understandings, on top of the complexity of the rules, makes for a very confusing first experience of the game. The most enduring games are always easy to learn but difficult to master. Chess is a good example of this. The moves are simple, but the grand masters have devoted countless hours to perfecting their game. A good

roleplaying game can also be like this. The new edition of D&D has shown us that an RPG can be simple, logical, and flexible. It is the players of the game who add to its complexity and richness as their skills develop.

Probably the best way to introduce a prospective player to the game is in an informal manner. Here are two possible scenarios for an informal lead-in to the crucial first game.

**The Storyteller:** Remember ghost stories around the campfire? If you can find yourself in this situation, you can manipulate the circumstances to immerse your audience into the story and perhaps ignite some roleplaying. Begin by telling a story with the same number of characters as there are audience members. Then as the story progresses, gradually pass control over to your audience. Begin by asking them collectively what they would do in a particular situation in the story. Build upon this by allocating a character from the story to each audience member. By doing this you are not overtly playing an RPG but, instead, you have developed an interactive campfire tale. Not a die was rolled, and yet your audience participated in your ad-libbed D&D adventure. If it goes well, some or all of your audience might like to be told about what you do at your weekly gaming session.

**Miniature Madness:** Has your brother, sister, girlfriend, boyfriend, or other acquaintance ever marvelled at your hand-painted miniature collection? If so, then this is a perfect avenue for introducing the basics of D&D. Set up your best miniatures on some equally impressive terrain (for maximum visual interest), and you can run a short D&D combat. Allocate each player a model and give them hit points, AC, a melee bonus, a movement score, and a melee weapon. Set up a grid or agree on a scale for movement. Start the combat by rolling initiative, then run the battle as normal. Aim for simplicity rather than slavish adherence to the rules, and in no time your players will want to know what rolling a "16" to hit means. Describe it vividly to them. For example, one of your players has just succeeded in hitting her opponent with a punishing blow. In response to this you might say, "Your character steps toward the whirling blade of Dargosh, parries once, and then proceeds to stab him deftly between the ribs." At this point, the person controlling Dargosh might like to describe his reaction and a counter attack based on his attack roll. All of these elements are a step toward a full-blown D&D adventure.

## The First Taste of D&D

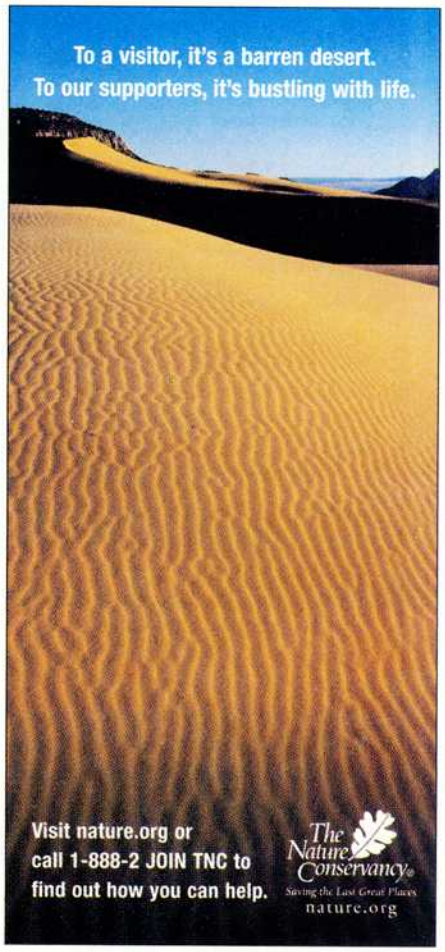
To a newcomer, a D&D session with all its rules, numbers, writing, planning, discussing, and sitting around a table can seem a little intimidating or even dull. These days we have relatively large amounts of leisure time that can be filled with anything from television to video games, the Internet, DVDs, and CDs. With these prevalent and readily accessible diversions, why sit around a table with three or four other people and talk for hours? This is the question that must be answered for your newcomer. Don't worry about trying to compete with technological amusements, instead, work on trying to show how D&D can be a welcome addition to their lives.

The hardest part of earning a newcomer's attention is the informal introductory session. Once this has been navigated, chances are your new player will want to find out more and will be excited enough to persevere through a few boring bits. So how can you set up a game that adds enough spice for a newcomer as well as being user friendly? Try these ten rules for breaking in a newcomer:

## Ten Rules for Introducing D&D

Use these rules as guidelines—one of the most important elements that isn't covered is your own assessment of the newcomer's likes, dislikes, and interest in various aspects of the game. At their simplest, these rules are merely signposts that help you show a new player how much fun D&D really is.

1. **Participation:** The first game should be played with your regular gaming group. Immerse the newcomer in the dynamics of the group, and remember that the newcomer will take her cues from everyone else. In other words, if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### 10 Ways a New Player Can Improve Your Game

1. New Perspective: A new player offers a new way of looking at problems and other players, making a creative addition to the group.

2. New Ideas: An established group often has a collection of shared experiences that shapes the way they game. While this adds to the game a great deal, shaking it up by adding a new person can make the game more fun for everyone.

3. New Audience: Many outsiders tire of your gaming stories after five or so repetitions; a new player will be interested in the backstory of the campaign, giving you an excuse to tell those stories again.

4. New Food: Everybody knows of some tasty snack that the rest of the group isn't aware of; now you've just got to convince them to share.

5. New Skills: Adding a new player is reward enough, but occasionally the new player's talent for art, miniature painting, or writing can enrich the game a great deal.

6. New Experience: Some new members are much younger, much older, or of a different gender than everyone else in the group. Such diversity only makes the gaming experience more enjoyable.

7. New Understanding: New players often ask interesting questions, and some invariably lead to complex issues that spark new ideas; heck they might even inspire you to propose a *Dragon* article.

8. New Enthusiasm: Seeing someone else become excited about the game is a good way to remind even jaded players that D&D is fun.

9. New Tricks: Adding a player expands the tactics available to the PCs; encourage versatility and innovation when a new player is added. This will also go a long way in making the player feel like an important part of the group.

10. New Reactions: A new player is the most likely one in the room to react to a creepy description or dramatic event. Enjoy it.

your other players are doing a good job, then this will likely rub off on the newcomer (see rule 5 as well).

**2. Simplification:** Set up a basic dungeon crawl and let the newcomer play a character who can bash monsters. It might seem silly to eliminate one of the greatest parts of D&D, its ability to deal with plot elements and intrigue, but once she understand that the success of all actions depends on rolling the big round die and adding significant modifiers, then saving throws and skills seem like second nature. Also, limit complicated spells. Let your new player ease into the realm of the fantastic. Introduce her to magic weapons and simple magic items first, then throw in a few spells. Focus on spells like *cure light wounds, magic missile,* and *light* at the beginning. Once your newcomer gets a taste for the power of magic, then show her what it can really do.

With regards to characters, make sure that the newcomer is playing a character whose class, race, and personality are relatively simple to play. If you are not sure what this is, ask your player to imagine her character and to try to describe that to you. What weapon does she use? How does she fight? Is she sneaky, intelligent, or brutal? Answering a few simple questions such as these can help your newcomer feel more attached to her character and thus more connected to the game.

**3. Uniformity:** Before you begin the game, heed this warning—make sure the newcomer has only one instructor, whether it's you or the player who she is most familiar with. When you are new to something, there is nothing worse than having five different people tell you five different pieces of information all at once. This is incredibly confusing. Uniformity should be the motto of D&D instruction. One voice, one fact at a time.

**4. Include a Running Commentary:** Try to explain what each player is doing when they roll a die or declare an action. Be succinct.

**5. Focus:** The experienced members of your gaming group should be prepared before the gaming session. They must be aware of rule 2 and that they are to be on their best behavior in terms of roleplaying focus. Don't let Bill, the movie buff, relate how his character reminds him of the latest Schwarzenegger movie. Trying to get your group back on track after a long digression can be very distracting for a newcomer. She needs to focus on the game in order to understand it.

**6. Provide Role Models:** Again, the experienced members of the group can lend a hand. Before the session, they need to be told that they are to try and be model roleplayers. They should concentrate on portraying their characters' personality, using the PC's skills and equipment in a logical way to complete the dungeon. The focus should be away from dice and rules and toward storytelling and fun.

**7. Fudge the Dice:** Don't kill anyone in the first session. If your players are rolling poorly, but your monsters are scoring critical hits, perhaps it's time to utilize DM's privilege—cheat. That's the reason you have a screen, so use it if you think someone is going to die. If a new player dies early on, chances are you'll have a hard time getting that person to play again. Also, ensure that the newcomer's PC is able to participate fully in the adventure. She won't enjoy herself if her 1st-level wizard is forced to cower behind the fighters for the rest of the game because she's used up her spells.

**8. Provide Options:** A newcomer will not want to invent a course of action for her character right away. Instead, she might need to be led or prompted a little. Use phrases like, "The orc is charging at your character. Do you want to run or stand and fight?" You can also try an open-ended approach, using phrases like, "The orc is charging at your character. What do you do?"

**9. Gloss Over Details:** Never get bogged down in rules lawyering, and don't be too pedantic about whether or not the newcomer's PC remembered to light her lantern. The first game for a newcomer should seem like a Hollywood movie (see below).

**10. Remember the Hollywood Approach:** Never skimp on special effects, never run for more than two

hours, the main character never dies, the villain is defeated in a climactic battle, the supporting cast is larger than life but shallower than the plot, and most of all, always leave room for a sequel!

## What Happens Next?

Once your newcomer has experienced D&D in your capable hands, then she will surely want more. This is the point at which she can be introduced into your weekly gaming group. As she becomes more familiar with the game, the other players in the group, and the idea of roleplaying, your role becomes easier. Continue to give her support as suggested in our 10 rules, but allow her some potential to make mistakes, and let her explore the game with increasing amounts of freedom. For example, she might wish to try a different character class or race. She might create a background story for her character and really flesh it out with battlecries, archenemies, or a simple character hook. The simple answer to all these requests is an emphatic "Yes, of course you can!"

## First Session How-To

One of the most important factors to keep in mind at all times when teaching a newcomer to play D&D is to keep things simple. A new player who feels overwhelmed is likely to throw his hands up and walk away in defeat. There's a lot of information for a new player to take in when learning D&D, so teach the game step-by-step, and add new layers as the player progresses. Below are instructions on how to run your first session with your new player.

1. **Create a Character.** Either before or at the beginning of the newcomer's first session, help him build his character sheet.

• Describe each character class to your newcomer in concise, simple terms, using no more than two or three sentences. Think "stereotypes." Once you've described all the classes, have the newcomer pick one that interests him most.

• Allow the newcomer to roll his character's ability stats, then, in a few brief words, explain what each is responsible for. Allow the new player to decide how to divvy up his ability scores.

• Fill in the rest of the newcomer's character sheet for him, with the following exceptions. Suggest two or three different weapons that would make sense for the player's character, and allow him to choose which one his character will use. Make a list of the class skills for your newcomer's character, and ask him to pick out the skills that he thinks will be most important for the character. Then, divide up the skill ranks accordingly. Suggest a few feats that would be good for the character to take (no more than four), and then explain what each one would allow the character to do. Have your newcomer choose the appropriate number of starting feats for his character, and then write a *brief* description each feat on the back of the character sheet for the player's reference.

• To help your newcomer find the most important and often used areas of the character sheet, highlight the following:

Ability modifiers
HP
AC total
Initiative total
Fortitude, Reflex, and Will Save totals
Total attack bonus for each listed weapon
Damage plus damage bonus (for example, 1d6+4)
Skill modifier total for each skill the character has ranks in

2. **Make it visual.** Even if you don't normally use a playmat, use one for the newcomer's first few sessions. Having a visual of what the character can see helps your newcomer understand what is going on in the game so that he can come up with a course of action for his next turn. Also it is wise to make a list of some basic moves a character can make during a turn.

3. **Give him a starting point.** If your newcomer is joining an already existing campaign, prepare a simple handout that breaks down the most important plot developments from the last few sessions. Giving the player this information verbally can be overwhelming on top of everything else he's trying to learn and remember.

4. **Organize the dice.** Set up your new player's dice in order from largest to smallest. This will allow him to concentrate on more important things than having to ask, "Which one is the d20?" for the fifteenth time.

5. **Bring on the battle.** Get into combat quickly, and have your newcomer refer to the list of actions and basic moves that you already prepared. If the player seems overwhelmed, give him some options and let him choose one.

6. **Bring on the goodies.** Reward the group immediately after the battle. Giving your newcomer rewards for killing monsters or disarming traps will get him more interested in continuing to play and in learning more about the game. Gold is good, but magic weapons and single-use items are better. People love stuff, even if it's imaginary. If you want excited first-time players, give them booty.

7. **Test out skills.** Point out opportunities in which your newcomer's character can use his skills. With so much to keep straight, it's likely that the player won't remember that he can open locks or sense someone's motive.

## The Final Word

Introducing a new player to the world of D&D can be a rewarding experience, both for you and the player. As your player becomes more familiar with the basic rules of the D20 system, spend more time explaining the intricacies of the game. Photocopy important sections of the *Player's Handbook* (such as combat and movement rules, the full descriptions of each race and class, attacks of opportunity, and so on) and let your new player read them at her leisure. Assign your newcomer projects (see *Dragon* #288) that enhance her learning and enjoyment of the game (such as answering a questionnaire about her character's background, finding a miniature that resembles her character, and so on) and be sure to reward her for her effort. Most of all, be patient—there is great satisfaction in teaching and honing another's skills. Who knows, your pupil might even teach you a thing or two.

# AGE OF WONDERS II:
## The Wizard's Throne

by Jonny L. Wilson

In *Age of Wonders II: The Wizard's Throne,* a legendary wizard asserts his prowess by dueling the master mages in the spheres of fire, water, air, earth, and death, an unfortunate setup that seems less polished than the average D&D game. To make matters worse, the legendary wizard is named "Merlin." Clichéd premises are nothing new to computer games, but fortunately, those are the only two negative comments that should be made about *Age of Wonders II.* The sequel to *Age of Wonders* (the turn-based strategy game that proved so addictive that two *DRAGON Magazine* staff members had to remove it from their hard drives because it was delaying book manuscripts) is everything it should be. It offers map exploration, turn-based strategic movement, tactical combat, a massive campaign, tactical terrain that affects combat, engaging research trees, and well-balanced artificial opponents. The new features include multiplayer support with simultaneous movement, beautiful new graphics, and more emphasis on conquest than on resource management. Plus, *Age of Wonders II* has a rich library of interesting scenarios featuring wizards other than Merlin.

In *Age of Wonders,* much of your turn was concerned with timing issues surrounding the migration from one faction to another and production issues concerning which unit or building to construct next. In *Age of Wonders II,* players can get along well by allowing the program to manage the cities far behind their lines and concentrating on front-lines cities. You also get a more lenient formula for desertion, so you don't have to migrate the populations as quickly.

**Fire Fighting:** Merlin uses the *geyser* spell to finish off Yaka, the first wizard encountered in the Sphere of Fire phase of the campaign.

In short, the game plays faster and flows smoother than its predecessor. Even if you didn't play *Age of Wonders,* its sequel offers great game play and a wealth of ideas for D&D players and Dungeon Masters.

### Age of Wonders II in DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

Like nearly every fantasy computer game, *Age of Wonders II* owes much of its inspiration to D&D. Units improve according to their success, wizards learn new and more powerful spells, moving through a threatened area evokes an attack of opportunity, and the monsters and enemies get bigger and stronger. In fact, many game elements used in *Age of Wonders II* seem directly analogous to spells in the *Player's Handbook.* Many of the monsters are similar to creatures from the *Monster Manual,* but the advanced military units of the varied races and some of the independent monsters show innovation that could spark ideas for any D&D campaign. Likewise, while many spells are familiar to fantasy roleplayers, there are original and interesting ideas for many different kinds of spellcasters. Since *Age of*

**Victory:** Like its predecessor, *Age of Wonders II: The Wizard's Throne* is a game that will vaporize hours as easily as the *venomous vapor* spell vaporizes foes, and every scenario inspires new ideas to use in a D&D game.

*Wonders II* is themed around the elements and nature, it seems fitting that many of the spells used in the game would fit druids and rangers in the D&D setting. The two spells below are both potent offensive weapons to add to the arsenals of the woodland classes.

### Geyser

Evocation
**Level:** Drd 2, Ranger 3
**Components:** V, S, M
**Casting Time:** 1 round
**Range:** Short (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
**Target:** One Creature
**Duration:** 1 round
**Saving Throw:** Reflex negates
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

A small geyser erupts from the ground and slams into the target, inflicting 3d6 + 1/level points of impact damage. The target must be standing on a solid surface—flying creatures cannot be affected by geyser. A successful Reflex saving throw allows creatures in the spell's area to avoid the effects provided that they can and do immediately move out of the affected area. In addition to its damaging effect, the geyser extinguishes all non-magical fires within 5 feet; it has no effect on magical fires.

*Material Component:* A splash of water collected from a flowing stream.

### Venomous Vapor

Evocation
**Level:** Drd 3, Clr 3
**Components:** V, S, M
**Casting Time:** 1 action
**Range:** Short (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 1 round + 1 round/3 levels
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude half
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

You create a cloud of deadly glowing mist around the target. The cloud immediately begins to corrode the target's body upon contact, his cells evaporating such that he begins to look like a victim of accelerated leprosy. The cloud attaches itself to the victim for the duration of the spell, causing 2d6 points of acid damage during each round of the spell's duration. Although the vapor seems to float through the air, it remains in the same square as the victim for the entire duration of the spell. If another creature enters the victim's square, it too takes damage.

*Material Component:* A small amount of pollen or a crushed, decayed mushroom.

**Passion Play:** These screens depict the before and after image when Mab of the Orcs discovers that Marinus of the Halflings planted the prodigious heart on behalf of someone else.

## Adventure Ideas

Dungeon Masters looking for quick adventure ideas might want to draw from these summaries of scenarios used in *Age of Wonders II.*

An arcane duel fueled by a romantic misunderstanding between wizards.

A fallen asteroid threatens to unleash a powerful, evil force.

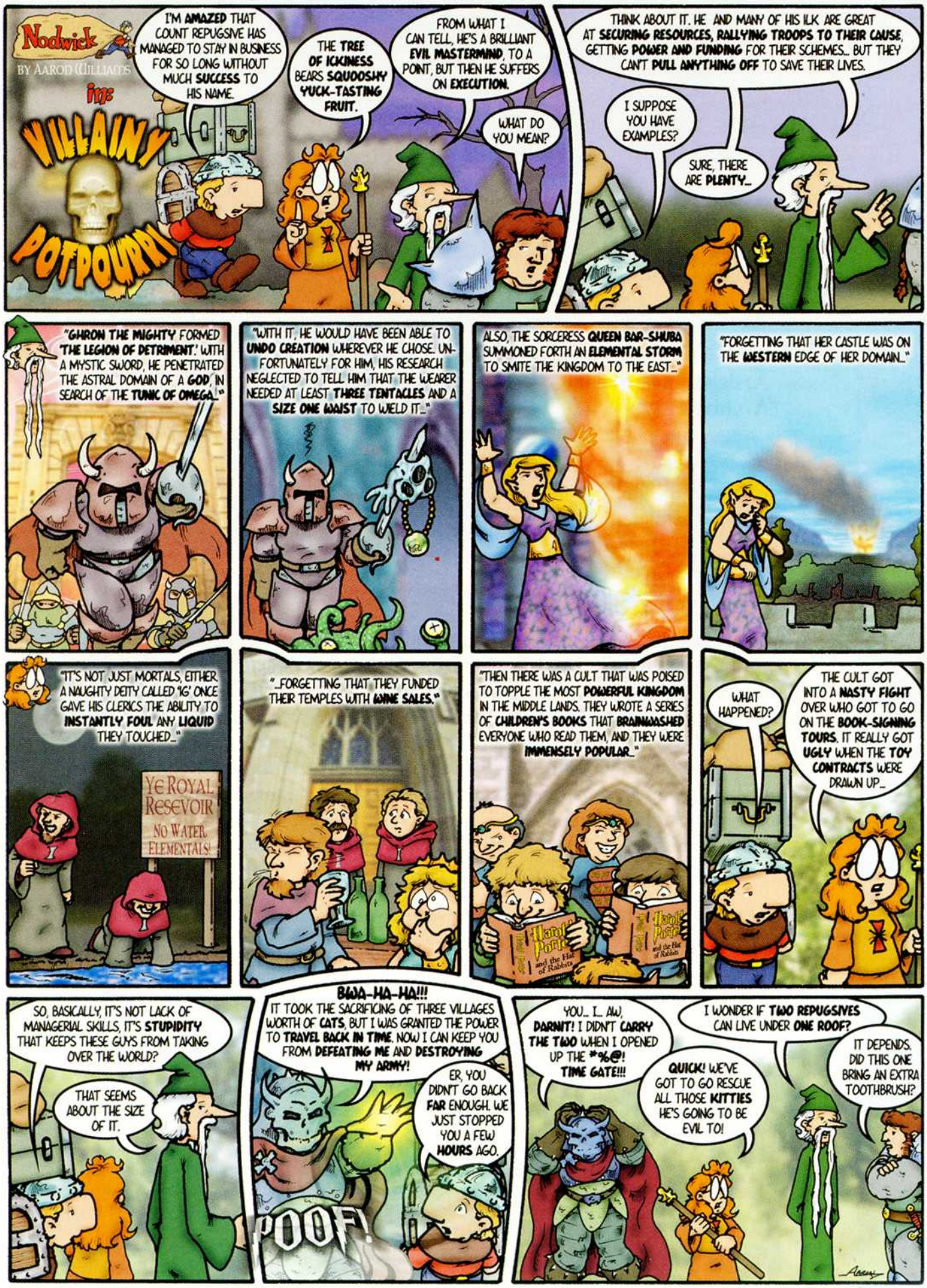
The ancient hexagonal artifact (complete with elemental nodes on each side and a central focus in the middle) has invoked a horrifying and unexpected threat.

The primal guardians of the elementals are fighting each other and destroying the world and its populations as collateral damage.

A volcanic eruption is providing cover for the latest invasion of evil.

A group of wizards has found a way to limit the mana or power available to cast arcane spells.

A civilization believes that it must recreate legendary battles from the past that took place between six Spirits of Creation. D


Nodwick
BY AARON WILLIAMS
in:
VILLAINY
POTPOURRI
I'M AMAZED THAT COUNT REPUGSIVE HAS MANAGED TO STAY IN BUSINESS FOR SO LONG WITHOUT MUCH SUCCESS TO HIS NAME.
THE TREE OF ICKINESS BEARS SQUOOSHY YUCK-TASTING FRUIT.
FROM WHAT I CAN TELL, HE'S A BRILLIANT EVIL MASTERMIND, TO A POINT, BUT THEN HE SUFFERS ON EXECUTION.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THINK ABOUT IT. HE AND MANY OF HIS ILK ARE GREAT AT SECURING RESOURCES, RALLYING TROOPS TO THEIR CAUSE, GETTING POWER AND FUNDING FOR THEIR SCHEMES... BUT THEY CAN'T PULL ANYTHING OFF TO SAVE THEIR LIVES.
I SUPPOSE YOU HAVE EXAMPLES?
SURE, THERE ARE PLENTY...
"GHRON THE MIGHTY FORMED 'THE LEGION OF DETRIMENT.' WITH A MYSTIC SWORD, HE PENETRATED THE ASTRAL DOMAIN OF A GOD IN SEARCH OF THE TUNIC OF OMEGA."
"WITH IT, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO UNDO CREATION WHEREVER HE CHOSE. UNFORTUNATELY FOR HIM, HIS RESEARCH NEGLECTED TO TELL HIM THAT THE WEARER NEEDED AT LEAST THREE TENTACLES AND A SIZE ONE WAIST TO WIELD IT..."
ALSO, THE SORCERESS QUEEN BAR-SHUBA SUMMONED FORTH AN ELEMENTAL STORM TO SMITE THE KINGDOM TO THE EAST..."
"FORGETTING THAT HER CASTLE WAS ON THE WESTERN EDGE OF HER DOMAIN..."
"IT'S NOT JUST MORTALS, EITHER. A NAUGHTY DEITY CALLED 'IG' ONCE GAVE HIS CLERICS THE ABILITY TO INSTANTLY FOUL ANY LIQUID THEY TOUCHED..."
Ye Royal Resevoir
No Water Elementals!
"...FORGETTING THAT THEY FUNDED THEIR TEMPLES WITH WINE SALES."
"THEN THERE WAS A CULT THAT WAS POISED TO TOPPLE THE MOST POWERFUL KINGDOM IN THE MIDDLE LANDS. THEY WROTE A SERIES OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS THAT BRAINWASHED EVERYONE WHO READ THEM, AND THEY WERE IMMENSELY POPULAR..."
Harold Potte and the Hat of Rabbits
WHAT HAPPENED?
THE CULT GOT INTO A NASTY FIGHT OVER WHO GOT TO GO ON THE BOOK-SIGNING TOURS. IT REALLY GOT UGLY WHEN THE TOY CONTRACTS WERE DRAWN UP...
SO, BASICALLY, IT'S NOT LACK OF MANAGERIAL SKILLS, IT'S STUPIDITY THAT KEEPS THESE GUYS FROM TAKING OVER THE WORLD?
THAT SEEMS ABOUT THE SIZE OF IT.
BWA-HA-HA!!!
IT TOOK THE SACRIFICING OF THREE VILLAGES WORTH OF CATS, BUT I WAS GRANTED THE POWER TO TRAVEL BACK IN TIME. NOW I CAN KEEP YOU FROM DEFEATING ME AND DESTROYING MY ARMY!
ER, YOU DIDN'T GO BACK FAR ENOUGH. WE JUST STOPPED YOU A FEW HOURS AGO.
POOF!
YOU... I... AW, DARNIT! I DIDN'T CARRY THE TWO WHEN I OPENED UP THE *%@! TIME GATE!!!
QUICK! WE'VE GOT TO GO RESCUE ALL THOSE KITTIES HE'S GOING TO BE EVIL TO!
I WONDER IF TWO REPUGSIVES CAN LIVE UNDER ONE ROOF?
IT DEPENDS. DID THIS ONE BRING AN EXTRA TOOTHBRUSH?

# Questions and Answers

by Skip Williams

Email your questions to:
thesage@wizards.com

This month, the Sage takes on the gods to answers questions about *Deities and Demigods, Faiths and Pantheons*, and clerics and paladins.

**After reading the Bahamut entry in *Deities and Demigods* I would love to make a cleric of Bahamut. Does the rule that a cleric of a god must have the same race as the god apply to Bahamut? Can I have a human cleric of the platinum dragon? Bahamut's Clergy and Temples section mentions dragons, half-dragons, and "other beings" among Bahamut's clergy. Does "other beings" include humans?**

The Clergy and Temples entries in *Deities and Demigods* serve the same purpose as the Typical Worshipers entries in the *Player's Handbook*. As long as the description doesn't specify a particular race, anyone can be a cleric of the deity. For example, Bahamut accepts clerics of any race because it mentions "other beings," but Kurtulmak accepts only kobolds.

**Does the always maximize roll ability of greater deities mean that these beings always receive a natural 20 on every attack and saving throw roll? If so, doesn't that mean that a greater deity will always hit on an attack, will always threaten a critical hit, and will always make its saving throw? If this is the case, why doesn't *Deities and Demigods* specifically state under the entry for each individual greater deity that the deity always hits, always threatens a critical hit, and always makes its save, much as these entries say that the deity always inflicts a certain amount of damage on a successful attack due to its maximize roll ability?**

*Deities and Demigods* does not say greater deities always hit, always threaten a critical hit, and always make their saving throws because they don't always hit, don't always threaten a critical hit, and don't always make their saving throws. The description of the always maximize roll ability on page 26 of *Deities and Demigods* tells you to roll a die when a deity attacks. The die roll must indicate a threat before the deity can inflict a critical hit (no matter what that die roll is, you still use a value of 20 for the value of the die roll when determining what AC the attack hits). Note that the deity also maximizes its confirmation roll when it achieves a threat, so it is virtually assured of confirming the critical hit. In the very rare case that a maximized attack roll would not be sufficient for a hit, the deity still hits if he rolls a natural 20 for his attack roll. As *Deities and Demigods* notes in the section on attacks on page 26, no deity automatically misses on a roll of a natural 1, so a greater deity does not automatically miss if he rolls a natural 1 on his attack roll.

Likewise, a greater deity does not get a natural 20 and an automatic success on any saving throw, but it is never at risk of automatically failing on a roll of a natural 1. As with attacks, if a die result of 20 is not sufficient for a successful saving throw, a greater deity still has a chance to roll a die and automatically succeed with a natural 20.

**If I'm making my own deities, how do I determine what ability scores, Hit Dice, skills, feats, domains, portfolios, and salient abilities each deity should receive?**

These will be determined mostly by assigning them, just as you would with any other new creature or NPC.

Deities receive skills and feats according to their outsider Hit Dice and class levels, just as a monster with a class does (See "Sage Advice," issue #290). Most of the deities in *Deities and Demigods* started out as 13-HD outsiders; the designers used the titan from the *Monster Manual* as a starting point and worked from there.

Domains, portfolios, and salient abilities, along with the methods for assigning them, are discussed in Chapter 2 of *Deities and Demigods*.

All the deities in *Deities and Demigods* have a standard array of ability scores (similar to the standard array for NPCs in Chapter 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). The standard array is 35, 28, 25, 24, 24, 24.

To this standard divine array, the *Deities and Demigods* designers added +1 for every 4 class levels a deity had and +1 for every point of divine rank. Certain deities also received racial ability adjustments for the races they created or rule over. For example, Corellon Larethian received elf racial adjustments.

All the deities in the book have ability scores generated this way, even the ones who are (or are reputed to be) ascended mortals. If you include divine ascension in your game and you want to use the standard divine array,

you can require these scores before ascension (the *Epic Level Handbook* offers some ideas and information on how characters can acquire these high scores), or you can just give the characters the scores as a benefit of ascension. Of course, there's no reason for you to give your deities any ability scores except the ones you think they should have.

**Page 29 in *Deities and Demigods* says a deity has to have paladin levels to grant paladin spells. Does this mean my paladin of Helm (from the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting) doesn't get any spells because Helm has no paladin levels?**

A divine spellcaster can cast spells even when he has no deity. A worshiper who cannot get spells directly from the deity is obliged to tap some other source.

Your paladin of Helm has the same spellcasting abilities any other paladin has. Exactly where those spells come from is a matter for you and your DM to resolve.

**The heartwarder prestige class (from *Faiths and Pantheons*) has the Spell Focus (Enchantment) feat as a prerequisite, yet at 6th level, a heartwarder gets the voice of a siren ability, which works as the Spell Focus (Enchantment) feat on spells with a verbal component. If this is correct, the voice of a siren ability is no benefit at all.**

This is a typo; the voice of a siren ability gives you the Greater Spell Focus (Enchantment) feat and the Spell Penetration feat, but they only apply to spells with a verbal component.

**Let's say I have a 5th-level cleric of Bane with the Law and Hatred domains, and I wanted to take the ocular adept prestige class (from *Faiths and Pantheons*). An ocular adept loses her spellcasting abilities (including her domains), but then, after getting the eyeball implanted, she is treated as if she changed her patron to the Great Mother. After this, my character gets to choose two domains (say Strength and Hatred). Now she's a cleric 5/ocular adept 1. How many domains does my character have? Since she's a cleric changing deities, she gets to choose two new domains for being a cleric, right? Does she also get two more domains for being an ocular adept? Do I use the ocular adept levels to determine the effect of the granted powers of the character's domains, the cleric level, the combined levels, or whichever is higher? What happens if I choose the same domain for each class (such as Law for both)? Do the domain powers stack? Can I continue to increase the character's cleric level after becoming an ocular adept?**

If you're a cleric of a deity other than the Great Mother when you add a level of ocular adept, you renounce your old patron deity and therefore lose your old domains and domain powers. As soon as you have the surgery that the ocular adept class requires, you adopt the Great Mother as your new deity and replace your old domains and domain powers with two new ones chosen from the domains listed on page 200 of *Faiths and Pantheons*. This is just like the process any other cleric uses when changing deities; having the surgery fulfills the requirement of completing a quest for the new deity (see Changing Deities on page 233 of the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting*). In any case, you choose only two domains, and these serve for both your cleric class and your ocular adept class.

Your cleric spells and granted powers use your cleric level to determine spell and power effects, while your ocular adept spells use your ocular adept levels. You have domain slots for each of your ocular adept spell levels, but you do not get any extra domain powers, nor do your ocular adept levels affect your domain powers in any way.

You may add cleric levels after becoming an ocular adept, just as any other multi-classed cleric can, except that now you are a cleric of the Great Mother.

**What happens when a cleric gets a domain spell that normally is an arcane spell? For example, a cleric chooses Water as one of his domains and eventually gets the ability to cast the *horrid wilting* spell. Does the spell count as an arcane or divine spell? If it's the former, does the cleric have an arcane spell failure chance if he casts the spell while wearing armor? If the cleric places *horrid wilting* on a scroll, is it an arcane or divine scroll? What if the cleric is a multiclassed cleric/wizard? Could such a character use any scroll with *horrid wilting* on it?**

Clerics cast divine spells. Any spell a cleric gets from a domain list is a divine spell (as is any spell the character gets from the cleric list), no matter what other class lists the spell happens to be on. If the cleric makes a scroll and places his divine *horrid wilting* spell on it, it is a divine scroll.

Any multiclassed spellcaster keeps his spellcasting classes separate. A multiclassed cleric/wizard casts cleric spells as divine spells, which are not subject to arcane spell failure. He casts his wizard spells as arcane spells, which are subject to arcane spell failure. If the character makes a scroll, he must decide if it is an arcane scroll or a divine scroll. If the character picks up a scroll, he uses it as a wizard of his wizard level if the scroll is an arcane scroll. The example character probably could use an arcane *horrid wilting* scroll, but not if he was a specialist and had Necromancy as a prohibited school. The example character could use a divine *horrid wilting* scroll, as could any other divine caster who somehow had *horrid wilting* on his class spell list.

**The description for the 7th-level druid spell *slime wave* (from *Masters of the Wild*) says the spell covers a creature with one patch of slime for every 5 feet of the creature's face, dealing 1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage per patch each round. I assume then that a 5 ft. by 5 ft. creature would take 1d6 points of**

**Constitution damage per round. I also assume a 10 ft. by 10 ft. creature would take 2d6 Constitution damage per round. So, how would the spell affect a 5 ft. by 10 ft. creature? Also, does a creature hit by the spell take the Constitution damage immediately in the first round?**

Face for creatures is measured in 5-foot squares, and "5 feet of face" in the spell description also refers to 5-foot squares. A creature with a 5 ft. by 5 ft. face indeed suffers 1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage per round. A creature with a 5 ft. by 10 ft. face covers two 5-foot squares and suffers 2d6 points of Constitution damage per round. A creature with a 10 ft. by 10 ft. face covers four 5-foot squares and suffers 4d6 points of Constitution damage per round.

A creature hit by a *slime wave* spell suffers Constitution damage immediately upon being struck and also suffers extra damage each round on the caster's turn unless the slime is removed.

**The Divine Might feat from *Defenders of the Faith* lets you use a turn/rebuke attempt to get a combat bonus. Does that mean that you mark off a turn/rebuke attempt for the day? Or does it mean you spend a standard action to activate the effect, just like a turn/rebuke attempt? Or is it a free action?**

Using Divine Might does not require an action at all. You can use the feat any time you attack, and you simply announce that you're using it and mark off a turn/rebuke use for the day.

**When a domain's granted power is a caster level increase, how does that affect making magic items? For example, the Healing domain gives you a +1 caster level for healing spells. How does that affect making potions and scrolls made with the Scribe Scroll and Brew Potion feats? Do you make the item at its normal caster level and then apply the increase, thus getting a better item for the money?**

For potions, scrolls, and wands, you can set the caster level of the item at any number high enough to cast the stored spell and not higher than your own caster level.

If you get a caster-level boost from a domain (or from just about any other source), you can use the increased caster level as the item's caster level. If you do so, however, you must pay the cost for the increased caster level, but you also get the benefits of the increased caster level (if any). For example, a 5th-level cleric normally could brew a *potion of cure moderate wounds* and set the caster level anywhere from 3rd level (the minimum level for casting *cure moderate wounds,* a 2nd-level spell, as a cleric) to 5th level (the creator's caster level). If the same cleric had the Healing domain, you could set the caster level for the *potion of cure moderate wounds* anywhere from 3rd level to 6th level. A *potion of cure moderate wounds* with a caster level of 6 would have a market value of 600 gp (spell level × caster level × 50 gp) and could heal 2d8+6 points of damage.

**I have a query about how ubiquitous the Hit Dice modifier for turn resistance is. The description of the ability says a creature with turn resistance has effectively more Hit Dice to resist turning attempts. Exactly where in the process of making a turn attempt does this apply?**

It applies at every point where the subject creature's Hit Dice are relevant. The subject creature's Hit Dice are relevant when a character makes the initial turning check. The check has to be high enough to affect the subject creature's modified Hit Dice. For example, a wraith has 5 Hit Dice and a +2 turn resistance. Any turning check made against the wraith fails unless it is high enough to affect a creature with 7 Hit Dice.

The subject creature's Hit Dice are relevant when assessing turning damage. For example, it takes 7 points of turning damage to turn a wraith.

The subject creature's Hit Dice are relevant when determining what undead a cleric can destroy. For example, it takes a 14th-level cleric to destroy a wraith.

The subject creature's Hit Dice are relevant when determining how many undead creatures a cleric can control. For example, a wraith counts as 7 Hit Dice worth of undead controlled by the cleric.

**When you use a *command* spell to order a foe to "die" or to "sleep," is the target rendered helpless and thus subject to a coup de grace attack?**

When a creature fails its save against the *command* spell, the creature obeys the one-word order from the spell to the best of its ability. In most circumstances, a command (from the spell) to "sleep" or "die" makes the subject prone and effectively stunned, not helpless. One simply cannot just go to sleep or play dead in the middle of a battle.

**Many cleric spells have both a somatic component and a divine focus. With a somatic component you must have a free hand to cast, but what about with a divine focus? Do you need to have a divine focus in your hand to cast spells? Could a divine focus be worn around your neck? Or do clerics just need both hands to cast spells?**

Any character needs one free hand to cast a spell with a somatic component, no matter what other components the spell has. In the case of a divine focus, it is sufficient to simply wear the focus (usually a holy symbol). Other kinds of focus components are manipulated during spell casting along with any material components the spell has, or simply carried on the caster's person. D

# PHIL FOGLIO'S WHAT'S NEW WITH PHIL & DIXIE

HELLO, FELLOW DO-GOODERS! DOC DIXIE HERE! TODAY WE'RE TALKING ABOUT VILLAINS!
for the love of God - HELP ME!
WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES SOMEONE A VILLAIN? SIMPLE! EGO PROBLEMS!
PUNY INSECTS - FEAR ME! I, DR. HEXACIOUS POGBOOMER, WILL DESTROY YOU!!
DOES THIS GUY NEED REASSURANCE OR WHAT?
BECAUSE THEIR EGOS ARE SO FRAGILE, THEY TAKE ANY PERCEIVED SLIGHT PERSONALLY.
YOU ATTEMPT TO THWART ME?! HA!! GIVE ME THE LAST DOUGHNUT OR YOU WILL PAY!!
NO WAY. YOU ALREADY ATE 17 OF THEM.
YOU DARE TO QUESTION MY MASTER PLAN? INSOLENCE!!
SO WHAT CAUSES THIS INSECURITY?
HEY!
WE BLAME THE PARENTS. SPECIFICALLY, THOSE WHO UNDESERVEDLY BOLSTER THEIR CHILD'S EGO.
YOU TIED YOUR OWN SHOELACE!! YAY!!
WAY TO GO, SON!
THANKS! HEY! IT'S ALMOST TIME TO CATCH THE BUS FOR COLLEGE!
LAB SWEET LAB
WHEN THE REST OF THE WORLD DOESN'T PLAY ALONG, THEY ONLY HAVE ONE SOURCE OF EGO GRATIFICATION LEFT: THEMSELVES (OR THEIR EVEN MORE PATHETIC MINIONS).
YOU'RE A GENIUS, MASTER!
I KNOW, I KNOW.
NOW COULD YOU TIE MY SHOES?
OH, VERY WELL!
SO - WHAT TO DO WITH THEM? DEFEAT THEM? HARDLY. THAT SHOWS YOU TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY. DO SO AND THEY'LL FOLLOW YOU FOREVER, INFLICTING YOU WITH THEIR PATHETIC SCHEMES.
LOOK! MUTANT BROCCOLI! WITH FEET! SO - DO YOU FEAR ME NOW?
sigh.
HOWDY!
THE SOLUTION? RE-ADJUST THEIR LIVES SO THAT THEIR SELF IMAGE IS JUSTIFIED.
PUNY INSECTS - FEAR ME!! I, DR. HEXACIOUS POGBOOMER, WILL DESTROY YOU!!
BUG-B-GON EXTERMINATING
THEN EVERYONE WILL BE HAPPY.
SUGAR
FLOUR
LARD
AIEEE!!
BUG-B GONE EXTERMINATING SERVICE
... ALMOST.

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